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A CONTRIBUTION

TO THE

STUDY OF THE SOURCES

OF THE

GENIE DU CHRISTIANISME

BY

MADELEINE DEMPSEY M.A; PH. D.

PARIS

LIBRAIRIE HONORÉ CHAMPION, ÉDITEUR

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Speaking of the many problems to be solved in connection with the Génie du Christianisme, M. Victor Giraud says in *Chateaubriand ; Études littéraires* (1904) : « Il y aurait un bien intéressant chapitre d'histoire littéraire à écrire sur les origines anglaises de la pensée de Chateaubriand... A quels besoins précis, à quelles aspirations profondes s'efforçait-il de fournir à la fois une satisfaction et une réponse et dans quelle mesure y a-t-il réussi ? Et l'auteur lui-même, comment s'était-il préparé à son œuvre ? Qu'y a-t-il mis exactement de sa personne morale, de son expérience intime, de son âme enfin ? De quels secours extérieurs, de quels livres s'est-il aidé pour réaliser son dessein ? A quelles sources a-t-il puisé et comment les a-t-il exploitées ? » Since these lines were written some of the questions have been answered. M. Giraud himself has studied the genesis of the Génie du Christianisme in his « Nouvelles Études » (1912) and shown that the germ of the work is to be found in Chateaubriand's earlier « Essai sur les Révolutions » and that far from being in direct contradiction, the « Génie » represents in many respects a continuation and a development of the preceding work. The scepticism and irreligion of the « Essai » is a passing phase, not a deep conviction. The author has been nourished on the literature of the 18th century and is imbued wih the teachings of the Encyclopédistes. Still he does not see eye to eye with them in everything and he is in as much revolt against their philosophy as against religion. The book teems with inconsistencies. « C'est un amas de contradictions » as Chateaubriand says himself. At one moment he is a true disciple of Voltaire, condemning all religions and priests : « Les religions naissent de nos craintes et de nos faiblesses, s'agrandissent dans le fanatisme et meurent dans l'indifférence » (*Œuvres complètes*, t. I, p. 177). Priests are clever knaves who take advantage of man's credulity and weakness for superstition and are no better than the priests of antiquity « dont l'intérêt fut d'épaissir le voile

d'erreur » [1]. (*Op. cit.*, p. 176). At another moment he shows himself a severe critic of his 18th century masters. Of Diderot he says : « il admettait le pur athéisme sans en apporter que de mauvaises raisons ». (*Œuvres complètes*, t. I, p. 166.) « Voltaire n'entendait rien en métaphysique ; il rit, fait de beaux vers et distille l'immortalité ». (Op. cit.) But J. J. Rousseau and Montesquieu are « deux hommes d'une trempe supérieure aux Encyclopédistes » (*Op. cit.*). For the former he professes unbounded admiration. Rousseau is « une âme religieuse » with whose doctrines he has great sympathy. Chateaubriand is, in reality, greatly preoccupied with religion, and returns again and again, to the subject in the last chapters of the « Essai ». So much so, that a great number of them could be carried over, without much alteration into the « Génie du Christianisme ». M. Giraud indicates fourteen different passages that appear in both works and even goes so far as to say : « De fait, le livre [le Génie] presque tout entier, idée générale, thèmes essentiels, tendances caractéristiques, est enveloppé et comme perdu dans « l'Essai sur les Révolutions » sous l'amas de lectures et de déclamations ».

In this last part of the Essai, Chateaubriand traces the history of religion through the ages and enumerates the different kinds of objections raised against it in the past. It is a very summary account with a Voltairean flavour but it is in the chapters dealing with the objections that we find the most audacious statements. He does not shrink from saying : « votre Dieu n'est qu'un tyran horrible et absurde » (*Œuvres complètes*, t. I, p. 187) or « il n'est pas du tout démontré qu'il exista jamais un homme appelé Jésus qui se fit crucifier à Jérusalem ». (*Op. cit.*, p. 188). Even the authenticity of the Scriptures is called into question : « nous raisonnons ici comme si nous croyions à l'authenticité du Nouveau Testament (ce que nous sommes bien loin de faire comme on le verra par la suite) ». (*Op. cit.*, p. 188). Though he does not refute the arguments against religion, we know where his sympathies really lie and though he does not give « les raisons victo-

1. Voltaire writes :

« Des hommes nourris de vos travaux [les théologiens], dans une heureuse oisiveté, enrichis de vos sueurs et de votre misère, combattirent à qui aurait le plus de partisans et le plus d'esclaves ; ils vous inspirèrent un fanatisme destructeur, pour être vos maîtres, ils vous rendirent superstitieux, non pas pour que vous craignissiez Dieu davantage, mais afin que vous les craignissiez » : Homélie sur la superstition. *Œuvres complètes*, t. VI, p. 141.

rieuses avec lesquelles les Abadie, les Houteville, les Bergier, les Warburton ont combattu leurs antagonistes » (*Op. cit.*, p. 190), we feel he is already on their side, if not yet wholeheartedly. In spite of his scepticism in matter of dogma, he avows his admiration for the externals of the Christian religion and side by side with these outbursts against faith, we find passages of rare beauty in praise of Catholic worship. He has no patience with the Lutherans and Calvinists who have rejected the « solennité du culte » while accepting much of the « absurdité du dogme ». Just as in the « Génie du Christianisme », it is the poetry of the Christian religion that appeals to him most, « une religion a bien des charmes lorsque, prosterné aux pieds des autels dans le silence redoutable des catacombes, on dérobe aux regards des hommes, un Dieu persécuté (*Op. cit.*, p. 179). And the sublimity of the Faith is as eloquently expressed here as later in the « Génie du Christianisme » : « Si jamais la religion a paru grande, c'est lorsque sans autre force que la vertu, elle opposa son front à la fureur des barbares et, les subjuguant d'un regard, les contraignit de dépouiller à ses pieds leur férocité native (*Op. cit.*, p. 180). So far from being an atheist, Chateaubriand intones in the « Essai », a hymn to the Creator that has passed in part into the « Génie du Christianisme » and forms the nucleus of one of its finest passages. But even in this beautiful rhapsody there is not complete submission and the firm convicton of the opening lines : « Il est un Dieu. Les herbes de la vallée et les cèdres du Liban le bénissent, etc. » soon dissolves into doubt, that, extends not only to the godhead but also to the immortality of the soul ; « O Toi que je ne connais point ! Toi dont j'ignore le nom et la demeure, invisible architecte de cet univers qui m'as donné un instinct pour te sentir et refusé une raison pour te comprendre, ne serais-tu qu'un rêve imaginaire, que le songe doré de l'infortune ? Mon âme se dissoudra-t-elle avec le reste de ma poussière ? Le tombeau est-il un abîme sans issue ou le portique d'un autre monde ? » (*Op. cit.*, p. 175). His faith is undermined by the philosophers, who, he says, have overthrown the Christian religion just as the sophists of Greece shook the foundations of paganism and as yet there is no premonition of the revival foreshadowed by the Génie du Christianisme, for religion has completely perished, « elle s'est enfin évanouie avec la monarchie dans le gouffre de la Révolution » (*Op. cit.*, p. 186).

But even if an illusion, religion is a source of comfort and consolation for the poor and afflicted. Its efficacy is best seen in the lives of its ministers and especially in the conduct of the clergy of France, « dont la simplicité du cœur, la sainteté de la vie, la pauvreté évangélique, la charité céleste en faisaient la partie la plus respectable de la nation ». Some of these priests were « moins des hommes que des esprits bienfaisants descendus sur la terre pour soulager les maux de l'humanité » (*Op. cit.*, p. 194). It is priests such as these who would keep alive the faith in France, but where are they ? Most of them in exile in England [1], where Chateaubrand writes, so it is not surprising that he is pessimistic and despairs of the future.

To define his beliefs from a perusal of the « Essai » would be difficult. He himself says : « Après tout, je ne sais si un homme est jamais parfaitement sûr de ce qu'il pense réellement ». He is in that state of indecision and scepticism that is, according to modern psychologists, a common feature of youth in the early twenties. M. Giraud says of him at this period : « On sent un esprit disputé entre des influences et des doctrines contradictoires, une pensée qui n'a pu faire encore l'unité en elle-même, une âme désemparée, flottante et qui, parmi ses négations et ses doutes, cherche visiblement où se prendre ».

Above all these questionings and vague longings for truth, one certainty emerges and that is the necessity of a religion of some kind. « Il faut une religion ou la société périt » is the conclusion of the « Essai » and it is the theme that Chateaubriand will develop and embroider with such brilliancy in his next work. We have here, says M. Giraud, « la pensée maîtresse de son « Génie du Christianisme ».

If the glory of having created a work of art and having written a masterpiece round this theme, belongs to Chateaubriand alone, he has not the honour of being original in his choice of subject. The same ideas were already current in French litera-

1. He is thinking no doubt of the refugee clergy in England whose exemplary lives were the subject of much eulogy, and more especially perhaps of l'abbé Carron. Obliged to leave Jersey, l'abbé Carron came to London in Sept. 1796 and founded a number of charitable institutions for his exiled compatriots. He opened a home for infirm priests, two chapels and two schools and a hospital in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road. Later he established other works of mercy in Somerstown, London. Delille calls him « Des François exilés la Providence vivante ». (Laity's Directory and F. X. Plasse : Le Clergé François réfugié en Angleterre, II. p. 124 ff ; and Vie de l'abbé Carron par un Bénédictin).

ture and had been made familiar by works such as : « Considérations sur la France » (J. de Maistre) 1797 ; « Le Discours Préliminaire » du dictionnaire de Rivarol, 1797 ; « La Théorie du Pouvoir » (Bonald) 1796 ; « Le Fanatisme » (La Harpe) » 1797 ; and « Du Sentiment » [1] (Ballanche). Not only in literature but in everyday life there was a growing need of religion. A great many of the high ideals fostered by the political leaders of the early days of the revolution had been shattered and religion seemed the only plank left from the shipwreck. It is only natural then, that Chateaubriand should be caught up in the tide of opinion in favour of a religious renaissance and that after his temporary revolt in the « Essai », should be carried away by a stream of thought that was gaining in strength every day both in France and abroad. We must not overlook either what Bertrin (Sincérité Religieuse de Chateaubriand) calls : « L'action quasi-insensible mais si efficace qu'exercent sur notre esprit les idées à la mode, même quand nous les combattons ».

How Chateaubriand came to write two works apparently so opposed to one another can best be understood by an examination of the circumstances in which they were written. He tells us in his « Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe » that he arrived in London on 21 May 1793 with only thirty louis in his pocket. He first

1. So much is there in common between « le Génie » and « Du Sentiment » that Chateaubriand has been accused of taking his title from Ballanche. J. J. Ampère writes as early as 1848, « cette expression même, le Génie du Christianisme se trouve chez M. Ballanche qui l'a employé le premier et a eu la gloire de l'inventer ». M. Latreille (*a*) is inclined to believe this, because as an habitué of l'Abbaye-aux-Bois, Mme de Récamier's famous salon, of which Chateaubriand was the idol, it was not likely that Ampère would have circulated a falsehood. On the other hand, Chateaubriand already signs himself Auteur du Génie du Christianisme in his letter to Fontanes in the *Mercure* of 22 déc. 1800. But if « Du Sentiment » was not published before sept. 1801, it had been written when the author was twenty and was therefore finished in 1796. Ballanche read extracts from it at meetings of a literary society in Lyons at which Ampère was present. « Du Sentiment » contains a quotation from the « Génie » which is called « Des Beautés Poétiques et Morales de la Religion Chrétienne » but the quotation is in the notes and not in the text. M. Giraud thinks Ballanche had a copy of the first edition of the Génie, the « bonnes feuilles » of which, Chateaubriand brought from London and which Fontanes probably communicated to his friend in Lyons. M. Giraud concluded for want of further evidence that both writers adopted the same expression simultaneously. He gives many examples to show the popularity of the word *génie* in French literature, proving that the expression was already current. It is also to be found in contemporary English writings. Gilbert Wakefield, editor of Pope, published a pamphlet called *The Spirit of Christianity*, in 1794. The writer deprecates the war with France, the prosecution of which is against all Christian principles. The first edition of this pamphlet was suppressed.

(*a*) *Chateaubriand : Etudes biographiques et littéraires* (1905).

lodged in a miserable garret in the Covent Garden area between the Strand, Holborn and the end of Tottenham Court Road [1]. In order to earn a living, he conceived the plan of writing the « Essai sur les Révolutions » and communicated his idea to Peltier who forthwith made arrangements with the publisher, Baylis, to take the young émigré into his house above the bookshop at 15 Greville Street, at a guinea a month and begin the publication of his work. While writing the « Essai », he procured through Peltier also, some translations from Latin and English by means of which he managed to exist. Not far away from him lived his compatriot, Hingant, in equally poor circumstances. They met every day for breakfast and dinner, and discussed literature together. Soon the translations ceased to come and the funds of both got very low. They had to curtail their menu : « Nous diminuâmes la ration de vivres, comme sur un vaisseau lorsque la traversée se prolonge. Au lieu d'un schelling par tête, nous ne dépensions plus à dîner qu'un demi-schelling. Le matin, à notre thé, nous retranchâmes la moitié du pain et nous supprimâmes le beurre » (M. O. T. II, p. 119). A period of great poverty ensued, at the end of which, Hingant attempted to commit suicide. His friends come and take him away to the country and Chateaubriand gives up his room with Baylis in order to move into still poorer quarters in New Road, Marylebone. This must have been the period when he was obliged to accept help from the Government or some charitable society [2]. While in Marylebone, Peltier comes to his rescue again, telling him of an advertisement by a Suffolk Antiquarian Society, about to publish a history of the county of Suffolk, for a French scholar able to

1. This could hardly be 50 Bathbone place (probably Rathbone Place, Oxford Street) from which he writes to the Marquis de Montaigu, in July 1796 (Correspondance Générale, V, page 233).

In the « Essai sur la Littérature Anglaise », pp. 188-189, Chateaubriand says : « Lorsque, au mois d'avril 1647, Fairfax et Cromwell se furent emparés de Londres, Milton ..... se retira dans une petite maison de High Holborn près de laquelle j'ai longtemps demeuré ».

2. On 23 November 1793, Chateaubriand received £ 3.0.6 from the Committee for the Relief of the French Refugees. Three societies had been formed in London in September 1792 to assist the French émigrés. The most influential was that presided over by John Wilmot M. P. at Freemason's Hall, Great Queen Street, founded for the relief of the clergy only. Another band of workers had been convened by the Lord Mayor, John Hopkins at the London Tavern with the same object, while a third organisation had its head quarters at the Marine Society Rooms, and helped not only the clergy but the laity as well. In the following year these different bodies were amalagated and Great Queen Street became the distributing

decipher old French MSS. We know now that this society and advertisement were an invention and that Chateaubriand went to Beccles in the capacity of a schoolmaster (A. le Braz : « Au Pays d'Exil de Chateaubriand »). The date of his departure for Suffolk can be fixed more or less precisely. It must have been subsequent to his receiving the subsidy of 23 Nov. 1793 and some time previous to the executions of Malesherbes and the Count and Countess of Chateaubriand which took place in April 1794. It was probably early in 1794 [1] for we learn from the Mémoires that he was the object of much interest and commiseration in Beccles when it became known by the papers that he was related to people of such importance and such an unhappy fate. « Les malheurs de ma famille, que j'appris par les journaux et qui me firent connaître sous mon véritable nom, ... augmentèrent à mon égard l'intérêt de la société. Les feuilles publiques [2] annoncèrent la mort de M. de Malesherbes, celle de sa fille Mme la Présidente de Rosambo, celle de sa petite-fille, Mme la Comtesse de Chateaubriand et celle de son petit gendre, le Comte de Chateaubriand, mon frère, immolés ensemble, le même jour, à la même heure, au même échafaud. M. de Malesherbes était l'objet de l'admiration et de la vénération des Anglais, mon alliance de famille avec le défenseur de Louis XVI ajouta à la bienveillance de mes hôtes » (M. O. T. II, pp. 127-128).

In Beccles Chateaubriand teaches French to the little boys of Brightley's school and of the Fauconberge school. He has also

centre for all parties. Towards the end of 1793 the voluntary funds being nearly exhausted, an application was made to the Secretary of State for money and through the instrumentality of John Wilmot and Edmund Burke, a bill was passed in parliament voting supplies for the Refugees. The first monthly sums received did not exceed £560 but before the middle of 1794 they had gone up to £1000 per month for the laity and £7,830 for the clergy. In August 1794, Chateaubriand, « malade » receives a further £2.2.0 under the heading of exceptional expenses. His friend Hingant de la Tiemblais is on the lists for the whole year, getting the « schelling des émigrés », or £ 1.10.6 per month. The attempted suicide, if it occured at all, must have taken place either earlier or later than this period of government subsidy (F. X. Plasse : « Le Clergé Français réfugié en Angleterre », t. II, pp. 172-209 ; Record office, T. 93).

1. M. Dick (*R. H. L.*, t. 15) says there is a tradition in Beccles that Chateaubriand taught in a school that closed down at Christmas, 1794. Cf. Le Broz, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-41.

2. The following announcement appeared in the *Times* 3 May 1794 : « Several celebrated magistrates, famous ex-constituents and autocrats of every state, age and of both sexes have just terminated their career under the blade of the guillotine, among them are President de Malesherbe, aged 72 years, an ex-minister and the defender of Louis XVI, le marquis de Chateau Briant (*sic*), captain of the royal regiment of cavalry, Mesdames de Pelletier, de Rosambo, etc. »

some private pupils. He makes the acquaintance of the Rev. Bence Sparrow and his brother Robert Sparrow of Worlingham Hall, both of whom are scholars and men of learning. The Rev. Sparrow is interested in painting and in old prints. It was perhaps in conversation with him that Chateaubriand planned his « Lettre sur l'Art du Dessin dans les Paysages ». Mr. Robert Sparrow had a valuable library and it is not hard to imagine that some of the books Chateaubriand used for his « Essai sur les Révolutions » were borrowed from the Sparrow brothers [1].

In 1795 we find him again in London. There are two letters from him from London in this year, one is the above-mentioned « Lettre sur l'Art du Dessin », the other a note to Roederer, enclosing « la Nuit chez les Sauvages de l'Amérique », dated 6th April 1795. It looks as if there were a break between the Beccles and the Bungay periods and that Chateaubriand came to London in the meantime. He may have come to arrange with Baylis for the continuation of the publication of the « Essai » or he may have come on holidays.

M. le Braz places the Bungay sojourn in the winter of 1795-1796 and he is probably correct. After that date it became increasingly difficult for aliens to reside near the coast [2].

In Bungay Chateaubriand spent a good part of his time under the roof of the Rev. Mr. Ives with whose daughter he falls in love. He gave her lessons in Italian literature and helped her with her studies generally. Of subséquent events, Miss Miller (« Chateaubriand and English Literature ») says : « The love affair with Charlotte reached a point when the family expected Chateaubriand to ask permission to marry the daughter. Supposing that timidity was holding him back, Mrs. Ives opened the subject, when Chateaubriand confessed that he was married. He then returned in haste to London ». M. le Braz in his charming study of Chateaubriand in Suffolk shows how much of this

1. « En cela, j'ai trouvé de grands secours chez les gentilshommes anglais qui m'ont ouvert leurs bibliothèques avec une générosité qui fait honneur à leur philosophie ». *Essai*, t. I, p. 17, note 2.

2. FoHowing Hoche's victory at Quiberon and the subjugation of the Vendée in March 1796, the French refugees were obliged to proceed further inland. « Sous la menace répétée coup sur coup d'une descente de l'armée française en Angleterre..... les bannis récemment établis au Sud, sur le littoral de la Manche ou qui y résident depuis longtemps se portent eux-mêmes vers la capitale ou vers l'intérieur ». (F. X. Plasse, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33).

episode has passed into his work and how much literature has gained by the idyll of Bungay.

Returned to London, Chateaubriand took up residence once again with Baylis and presided at the issue of his first work, « L'Essai sur les Révolutions » from the printing press. « L'essai fit du bruit dans l'Emigration » (*M. O. T.* II, p. 152) and was reviewed by some contemporary English journals though not very favourably [1]. Sought after by the notable French emigrants, he decided to change his address and move into more respectable quarters. « Etant devenue presque un personnage, la haute Emigration me rechercha à Londres, je fis mon chemin de rue en rue, je quittai Holborn-Tottenham Court road et m'avançai jusque sur la route de Hampstead » (*M. O. T. II*, p. 153). Leaving the society of the poorer members of the Emigration, he makes the acquaintance of more influential people. He gets to know Christian de Lamoignon, Mme Lindsay, Malouet, Montlosier, le chevalier de Panat, l'abbé Delille and other higher Church dignitaries and forms that friendship with Fontanes that is to have such an important effect on the development of his genius. Proscribed by the 18th Fructidor, Fontanes comes to London in the beginning of 1798. Already a notable figure in the literary world, he assumes a certain prestige in the eyes of Chateaubriand who had known him in pre-revolution days in Paris. Drawn

1. The Critical Review (Vol. 19, p. 494) says of the Essai : « This writer, while he affects some degree of method, is desultory and irregular. He seems to lose himself in the immensity of his subject, and as he promises a very copious work, we are apprehensive that it will be a heap of confusion — a chaos of indigestion ». The Analytical Review (Vol. 25, p. 579) says : « The author appears to be a man of extensive reading, ready memory and lively genius. He has brought together a large collection of facts and opinions, which if they should not cast much new or satisfactory light upon the great question concerning the probable effect of political revolutions, may at least amuse the reader ».

Though Chateaubriand succeeded in preventing Peltier from reviewing the Essai in his Journal, he was not able to restrain Montlosier or perhaps did not try, for A. Bardoux says : « Lorsque parut « l'Essai sur les Révolutions », Montlosier s'empressa d'en rendre compte et le fit avec bienveillance et justice ». This must have been in the short-lived « Journal de France et d'Angleterre », that was merged into the Courier de Londres in August 1797.

(See A. Bardoux : « Le Comte de Montlosier et le Gallicanisme »).

The Monthly Review (Vol. 22, p. 540) was more flattering : « This whole volume deserves to excite notice and to obtain perusal. In nothing does it resemble that crowd of ephemeral commonplace works, which every week hatches from the mud of the revolution. Much peculiarity and novelty of view and information very comprehensive, distinguish the author. He quotes even to pendantry, when he is examining a beaten topic and his style swells into eloquence when he can snatch himself from the men of history and society, to describe his excursions into Canada and his passion for savagery ».

towards one another by common interests, they become close friends, taking long walks together, visiting Chelsea taverns and discussing Milton and Shakespeare (*M.O.T.* II, pp. 171-173). When Fontanes leaves London in July 1798, Chateaubriand writes him long effusive letters, telling him of his solitude and desolation. He also tells him of the progress of his new work for in the months following Fontanes' departure Chateaubriand's genius has taken a new direction and he is already embarked on the composition of the book that is to bring him fame and glory.

Though his outlook is more cheerful, he still has to fight against poverty and want [1]. Fontanes had held out hopes of a royalist subsidy [2] for the « Natchez », but it is not forthcoming, and getting into communication with M. de Baudus, editor of the *Spectateur du Nord*, Hamburg, through the intermediary of Dutheil, Chateaubriand writes in November 1798 [3] : « Ma position dans ce pays devient de plus en plus précaire et affligeante et je ne vois guère le moyen d'en sortir ». At the end of the same letter he begs him to remember the « solitaire anglais, s'il entendait parler de quelque place littéraire qui ne demandât que peu de travail et lui laissât beaucoup de loisirs », so that he could eke out a living while continuing his literary labours. In the next letter of 5 April 1799, he asks if the well-known Hamburg publisher, Fauche, could arrange to let him do some translations ; « le gentilhomme breton traduirait un ouvrage quelconque, histoire, science ou roman ; il traduirait également du grec, du latin, de l'italien ou de l'anglais. Combien Fauche donnerait-il pour une feuille de traduction ? » He asks for a prompt reply because he is in bad straits and is even thinking of emigrating to the East Indies. With all the urgency of his position, he does not fail to make his conditions. He must be allowed to do the translations at his own pace and when he likes, because he has

1. Chateaubriand's name appears in the accounts of the Relief Committee from February 1798 down to his departure in 1800, for the usual shilling per day. A note in the margin for the June account of the latter year says : « parti en mai 1800 ». His money is generally collected by his brother-in-law, du Plessis-Passeau (sic) but on one or two occasions he signs for it himself (*Record Office*, T. 93, n°° 32 ; 16 ; 17). In a descriptive register of the recipients of the Fund, Chateaubriand is described as : « M. de Chateaubriand, François, officier d'infanterie de Paris, 12 Hampstead Road » (T. 93, n° 28).

2. In a letter to M. Dutheil, Chargé d'affaires of the Comte d'Artois, 2 May 1798, Chateaubriand thanks him for a past favour and hints at further assistance for his next undertaking (*Correspondance*, t. I, p. 341. Supplément).

3. See *Journal des Débats*, 11 March 1925.

other work on hand. « Il faut, encore, que j'aie la liberté de traduire autant de feuilles dans une semaine que je voudrais, selon ma paresse ou mes besoins. »

De Baudus does not reply immediately and in the next letter of the 6 May 1799, Chateaubriand only makes a passing reference to the translation scheme which does not seem to have materialised. The « Génie du Christianisme » is now in the press in London and in his necessitous condition, Chateaubriand has recourse to the Royal Literary Society from which he receives a gift of ten guineas, on the recommendation of Peltier [1] (*R. L. C.* Vol. 5, p. 488). It is the beginning of the end of his struggle for existence. Next year, May 1800, he returns to France where the generosity of his friend, Fontanes, enables him to carry on, till the publication of Atala (1801) assures him of a livelihood, by its instantaneous success. The following year, April 1802, appears the « Génie du Christianisme » and the fortune of the writer is made.

As we shall see later, the first draft of the Génie du Christianisme was published in London by Dulau and a second edition printed in Paris in 1800, was bought back by the author and reconstructed for the definitive edition in 1802, which was therefore, really the third edition. The first two editions have disappeared and despite the indefatigable efforts of M. Giraud and other scholars interested in the quest, they seem to be irreparably lost. It is a most regrettable loss from the point of view of the sources. It would be of great interest to ascertain through a comparison of the London and Paris editions, the additions, omissions, and corrections made under the counsel of Chateaubriand's literary advisers in France. M. Giraud has attempted something of the kind with the aid of reviews in contemporary newspapers and an article in « La Ruche d'Aquitaine » of 1819, giving a chapter omitted from the Génie of 1802 and later editions, along with the help of variants of the London édition, published in some editions of the Œuvres Complètes. The loss of the first two editions seems, moreover, to have retarded the study of Chateaubriand's debt to English literature in the « Génie du Christianisme ». This is not the case with his other writings. M. Bédier and M. Chinard as well

1. In June 1799.

as a number of other scholars have examined with more or less success the sources of the American novels, René, Atala and the Voyage en Amérique, while Miss Meta Miller in a recent publication, « Chateaubriand and English literature », has made a general survey of Chateaubriand's English sources, dealing in particular with the influence of Milton and Ossian. Some of the same investigators have dealt with certain English influences in the « Génie du Christanisme » but so far there has been no effort to study its English sources in general. This want we shall attempt to supply and try to answer with regard to this book, M. Giraud's final questions : « De quels secours extérieurs s'est-il aidé pour réaliser son dessein ? A quelles sources a-t-il puisé et comment les a-t-il exploitées [1] ? »

1. The writer wishes to acknowledge gratefully, the assistance of Professor Louis M. Brandin of University College, London, under whose guidance this work was undertaken and completed, and to thank Professor Fernand Baldensperger for his advice on certain points of research, the results of which are incorporated in the footnotes. She has pleasure in making known also, that it was mainly due to an illuminating course of lectures on Chateaubriand, delivered by Professor Paul Hazard in London in November 1925 that she first conceived the idea of this study.

CHAPTER II

The origin of the « Génie ».

Early titles of the « Génie du Christianisme » show that it was intended to be an apology for the Christian religion and an answer to the « philosophers » and all those who denied the cultural value of Christianity. Chateaubriand mentions it for the first time in a letter to de Baudus [1] written in London on 5 April 1799 : « J'ai un petit manuscrit sur la Religion chrétienne par rapport à la Morale et à la Poésie » and six months later he extends the title and calls the new work « Des Beautés Poétiques et Morales de la Religion Chrétienne et de sa supériorité sur tous les autres cultes de la terre » (Letter to de Baudus, 25 oct. 1799) [1]. In his preface to the edition of 1802 — the so-called first edition — he defines his aim as follows : « J'ai écrit pour la religion, par la même raison que tant d'écrivains ont fait et font encore des livres contre elle, où l'attaque est permise, la défense doit l'être » and in the preface to the edition of 1828, he is even more explicit. He speaks of himself as : « celui qui avait voulu faire aimer le christianisme par la beauté de son culte, par le génie de ses orateurs, par les vertus de ses apôtres et de ses disciples ». He had not set out to refute the arguments of sophists or dialecticians, whose minds were closed against reasoning, but to restore to religion all the prestige it had lost in the eyes of the world by the writings of the « philosophers » and unbelievers who had covered it with ridicule and made it a symbol of ignorance and barbarism. « Ce n'était pas les sophistes qu'il fallait réconcilier

1. Amable de Baudus belonged to an old Florentine family and was born in Cahors where he held important government and municipal positions. He joined the royalist army in 1792 and on its disbandment, lived for a time in Holland. Finally, settling in Hamburg, he became editor of the « Spectateur du Nord », a French journal of great influence on the continent during the Revolution. Fontanes was his friend and collaborator (P. Hazard, R. H. L., 1906). M. Hubert Morand published six unedited letters, from Chateaubriand to de Baudus in the Journal des Débats, 11 March 1925. The letters are dated as follows :

Letter n° 1, 2 janvier. Letter n° 2, 15 août 1798. Letter n° 3, 7 novembre 1798. Letter n° 4, 5 avril 1799. Letter n° 5, 6 mai 1799. Letter n° 6, 25 octobre 1799.

1. The same title appears in a letter to Fontanes 25 octobre 1799, transmitted through the medium of de Baudus (*Correspondance* I, p. 19).

à la religion, c'était le monde qu'ils égaraient. On l'avait séduit en lui disant que le Christianisme était un culte né du sein de la barbarie, absurde dans ses dogmes, ridicule dans ses cérémonies, ennemi des arts et des lettres, de la raison et de la beauté ; un culte qui n'avait fait que verser le sang, enchaîner les hommes et retarder le bonheur et les lumières du genre humain ». Instead of disputing the truth of dogmas and doctrine it was his intention to prove that « de toutes les religions qui ont existé, la religion chrétienne est la plus poétique, la plus humaine, la plus favorable à la liberté, aux arts et aux lettres, que le monde moderne lui doit depuis l'agriculture jusqu'aux sciences abstraites, depuis les hospices pour les malheureux jusqu'aux temples bâtis par Michel-Ange et décorés par Raphaël » (« Génie » I, l. I, p. 5).

If the defence of religion was the main object of the « Génie du Christianisme », there were other motives for its composition that are scarcely less important. Above all, there is the personal element, for we cannot overlook the author's remorse for the irreligious « Essai sur les Révolutions » or deny that the « Génie » is to some extent a work of expiation. « Mes sentiments religieux » he says in the preface to the first edition, « n'ont pas toujours été ce qu'ils sont aujourd'hui. Tout en avouant la nécessité d'une religion et en admirant le christianisme, j'en ai cependant méconnu plusieurs rapports. Frappé des abus de quelques institutions et du vice de quelques hommes, je suis tombé jadis dans les déclamations et les sophismes. Je pourrais en rejeter la faute sur ma jeunesse, sur le délire du temps, sur la société que je fréquentais, mais j'aime mieux me condamner, je ne sais point excuser ce qui n'est point excusable » (*M. O. T.* II, p. 565). The poetical account of his conversion, due to the death of his mother and sister, both announced at the same time, has been discredited and justly so. His mother died on 31 May 1798 and his sister, Mme de Farcy writes to him a month later to tell him the sad news. She reproaches him with his loss of faith and tells him how the error of his ways has saddened the last days of his mother on earth. Chateaubriand says that when Mme de Farcy's letter reached him, she herself was dead and « les deux voix sorties du tombeau, cette mort qui servit d'interprète à la mort, m'ont frappé. Je n'ai point cédé. J'en conviens, à de grandes lumières surnaturelles, ma conviction est sortie du

cœur ; j'ai pleuré et j'ai cru » (*M. O. T.* II, p. 566). (We know now that this account is inexact and that Chateaubriand arranged events in this way for dramatic effect. The sister was not dead when her letter arrived as she did not die till 26 July 1799, and her letter of 1 July 1798 could hardly have been over a year in transit even under the exceptional conditions of war between France and England. At any rate, in Chateaubriand's letter to de Baudus of the 5 April 1799 we have definite proof that the first draft of the Génie was composed before Mme de Farcy's death. He writes : « Je vais encore, Monsieur, prendre la liberté de vous importuner. Il faut que vous me rendiez un service auprès de Fauche [1]. J'ai un petit manuscrit sur « la Religion Chrétienne par rapport à la Morale et à la Poésie »..... Ce pamphlet contient à peu près 3 feuilles d'impressions in-8° ; j'en demande 15 guinées. Fauche veut-il l'acheter ? D'abord, il est à peu près sûr que le nombre d'exemplaires que Deboffe et Dulau [2] pourront lui en prendre à Londres couvrira au moins ses frais. Voyez si vous pouvez, monsieur, me rendre ce service ». If the original « Génie » was ready therefore in the spring of 1799, Chateaubriand's conversion was not so spontaneous as he would have us believe. We have seen that not only was he ripe for conversion while writing the « Essai » but after its publication he was to succumb to influences that were to change his whole outlook, and lead him to a more optimistic view of life. Drawn into a distinguished social circle, he became the centre of attraction, so it was only natural that the world should assume a rosier hue. It is to the companionship of Fontanes, however, that we must attribute the greatest effect. M. Séché says « que c'était Fontanes qui, durant les quelques mois qu'il passa à Londres en 1796, prépara les voies du seigneur dans le cœur de Chateaubriand et que la mort et le vœu suprême de sa mère ne furent que l'étincelle électrique qui raviva la petite veilleuse aux trois-quarts éteinte que le christianisme y avait allumée aux jours de son enfance ». In the interval between his first meeting with

1. Pierre-François Fauche was born at Neuchâtel. A strong supporter of the royalist party, he lived during the Revolution in Hamburg where he became an important publisher and the centre of a group of men of letters, mainly French Emigrés. It was from his printing-press that the « Spectateur du Nord » was issued.

2. Deboffe and Dulau were two well-known London publishers, frequented by the Emigrés.

Chateaubriand in 1789 and their friendship in London, Fontanes from being a sceptic had become an ardent believer. His writings at this time are replete with the fervour of a neophyte [1].

In those conversations with Fontanes in London, Chateaubriand read extracts from the « Essai » and from the « Natchez » which he was then composing. So much we can gather from Fontanes' [1] letter of the 28 July 1798, « ma pensée la plus chère et la plus constante, depuis que je vous ai quitté, se tourne sur les Natchez. Ce que vous m'en avez lu et surtout dans les derniers jours est admirable et ne sortira plus de ma mémoire » (*M. O. T.* p. 173). What those extracts were we know from Chateaubriand's famous letter to la Citoyenne de Fontanes (19 August 1799) in which he announces the « Génie ». « Nous croyons que vous serez contente de ce que vous verrez. C'est peut-être ce qu'il (l'auteur) a fait de mieux jusqu'à présent, outre ce que l'ouvrage contient par ailleurs des Natchez, afin de donner au public un avant-goût de cette épopée de l'homme sauvage. Le morceau sur le clocher, le tombeau dans l'arbre, le coucher du soleil en pleine mer, le couvent au bord d'une grève et quelques autres encore s'y trouvent » (*M. O. T.* II, p. 557). To conclude therefore, that Fontanes encouraged Chateaubriand in the new direction of his thoughts and was the prime factor in his conversion is but to echo the words of M. Séché (*Revue Bleue*, 19 April 1902) « Cela prouve évidemment que Fontanes connaissait tous les morceaux pour les avoir entendu lire à Londres par Chateaubriand. Et comme cette lecture n'avait lieu que dans les derniers jours qui précédèrent son départ et que ces morceaux étaient frappés au coin même de l'esprit qui devait animer le « Génie du Christianisme », j'en conclus que la conversation de Fontanes ne fut pas étrangère à leur rédaction et que Chateaubriand était à moitié conquis aux idées nouvelles quand il apprit la mort de sa mère ».

1. Sainte-Beuve says of Fontanes at this period : « En fait de croyances religieuses, il exprime partout l'idée qu'elles sont nécessaires aux sociétés humaines comme aux individus, qu'elles seules remplissent une place qu'à leur défaut envahissent mille tyrans ou mille fantômes » (*Portraits Littéraires* II, p. 240).

In a letter to Joubert on the death of his father 1790, Fontanes writes : « Ce n'est qu'avec Dieu qu'on se console de tout. J'éprouve de jour de jour combien cette idée est nécessaire pour marcher dans la vie. J'aimerais mieux me refaire chrétien comme Pascal... que de vivre à la merci de mes opinions ou sans principe comme l'Assemblée Nationale ; il faut de la religion aux hommes ou tout est perdu » (Raynal : *Correspondants de Joubert*, quoted by V. Giraud : *Nouvelles Etudes*, p. 96).

But Fontanes was more than a simple admirer of his friend's work. He proves himself a practical benefactor [1], for when he passes through Hamburg in the summer of 1798, he meets the editor of the « Spectateur du Nord » and speaks to him in the most flattering terms of his exiled compatriot, recommending « Les Natchez » for publication. He also arranges that de Baudus shall act as medium for his correspondence with Chateaubriand and in this way, puts his two friends into touch with one another. Not long after this interview, we find de Baudus making an offer to publish the. « Natchez » in his journal, as is evident from Chateaubriand's reply : « Je sens vivement, monsieur, l'honneur que vous me faites en me demandant mes rhapsodies pour votre excellent journal. Je vois que votre ami vous a parlé des « Natchez ». Pour finir cet ouvrage il me faudrait encore quelques années de repos que je ne puis me promettre..... Je crains bien que M. de Fontanes ne se soit trop laissé aller à son attachement pour moi en fondant sur mon travail des projets de rappel de succès. Les « Natchez » sont bien loin d'avoir un mérite assez transcendant pour produire une telle révolution dans ma destinée ». We have here the first hint of those worldly motives that were not to be altogether absent from the conception of the « Génie » and to which M. Séché refers when he says : « il est bien permis de penser que Chateaubriand céda en parti à des intérêts d'ordre humain quand il entreprit d'écrire le « Génie du Christianisme » (« Revue Bleue »). According to a tale reported by Las Cases in the Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène (t. IV. p. 121) Dulau, Chateaubriand's publisher in London, is supposed to have foreseen the change in thought that was coming over France and to have suggested that it would be more profitable to abandon the philosopher's camp for the Cause of Christianity. « Persuadé que l'irréligion avait fait son temps, le libraire avisé (Dulau) aurait représenté à l'écrivain que le plus sûr moyen de capter désormais l'intérêt public serait de prendre le contrepied et de se vouer à la défense de la religion » (M. Duchemin, « Bulletin du Bibliophile », Nov. 1923).

M. Bertrin refused to credit this tale of hearsay or believe in the perspicacity of the London publisher, « en 1798 », he says,

1. Fontanes had also obtained for Chateaubriand a promise of a subsidy for the publication of his works from the Royalist Chargé d'affaires, M. du Theil. (See *Correspondance Générale*, I, p. 341 et M. Giraud : *Etudes Nouvelles*, p. 130).

« rien ne faisait prévoir encore la restauration prochaine des ruines que la Révolution avait accumulées. Nul ne pouvait songer au rétablissement du culte. En un mot, des circonstances qui ont favorisé le succès du livre apologétique de Chateaubriand ne se présentaient encore aux regards de l'observateur » [1] (« Sincérité Religieuse », p. 106). To which we must reply that, when Chateaubriand began, as we know now, the composition of the « Génie » at the end of 1798 or in the first days of 1799, there were already signs of a change of feeling in France. Catholic churches had been gradually reopened since 1795 and administered by the constitutional clergy, while thousands of emigrant priests had returned secretly before close of the century, and were celebrating mass in private chapels and oratories (See Séché R. B.) [2]. Besides it was not likely that even the most insignificant signs of the restoration of the Catholic cult, which they so earnestly desired, should escape the notice of Dulau [3] and his friends, many of whom were exiled priests, living on charity and longing for the day when they could return to their country. That Chateaubriand yielded in part, at least, to motives of worldly success in writing the « Génie » may be seen from further quotations from his letters to de Baudus. In letter, No. 4, he writes : « Cet ouvrage [« le Génie »] est très chrétien, tout analogue à la circonstance et ne saurait guère manquer de ce succès attaché aux ouvrages de circonstances », and again in letter N° 5 : « Je ne crois pas que l'opuscule sur la religion puisse manquer sa vente, à cause du nombreux parti qui le porte tant au dehors qu'au dedans de la France » ; and his desire to make his new work not only a literary but a popular success emerges in letter, No. 6 : « Il me serait impossible de vous donner

1. In reply to M. Bertrin, M. Baldensperger says : « Or, il est certain, au contraire, que pour tous les membres du groupe émigré que fréquente désormais l'auteur de l'Essai, la persistance en dépit de la Révolution des traditions religieuses chez la majorité des Français ne fait pas doute ; surtout l'importance d'une foi commune, « moyen de lier ensemble tous les instants de la vie d'un peuple », l'appui que l'Etat peut demander à l'autel, toute cette interprétation uniquement sociale d'un christianisme traditionnel, considéré comme une garantie contre-révolutionnaire, est parfaitement admise et courante » (*Etudes d'Histoire Littéraire* s 2, p. 122).

2. See also M. V. Giraud : « Le Christianisme de Chateaubriand », p. 156 .

3. Dulau was a former Benedictine monk and nephew of Mgr. Dulau, Archbishop of Arles, assassinated at the Carmes. He was respected by the Emigrants on account of his illustrious uncle, and also for his own sake, because he was not merely « un simple commerçant plus ou moins entreprenant ». (See B. B. 1923, and M. Baldensperger, (*Etudes d'Histoire Littéraire* 2. p. 116).

une idée exacte de ce livre, différent par son ton et par son exécution de tous les livres religieux qui existent. J'ai fait tous mes efforts pour en bannir le ton polémique ou théologique et pour en rendre la lecture aussi agréable que celle d'un roman ». In the light of these recent revelations, it would be difficult to deny the conclusion of M. Séché : « Je ne sais si je m'abuse, mais les yeux de Chateaubriand étaient à peine dessillés qu'il aperçut le parti merveilleux, qu'il pourrait tirer de la religion chrétienne », and not to acknowledge in Chateaubriand a worldly wisdom and a sane appreciation opf his own interests that is quite compatible with his attitude as the defender of the Christian religion.

As the idea of a religious revival spread in France, it became a topic of interest in England as well, especially among the French émigrés whom it intimately concerned and the more conservative element of the native population who associated irreligion with Jacobinism [1]. A certain amount of literature grew up round the subject and M. Baldensperger suggests that just as Chateaubriand took an interest in the activities of contemporary revolutionary societies and radical writers [2] while composing his « Essai sur les Révolutions », he was probably alive to all that was being written in favour of religion while he was preparing his « Génie du Christianisme ». « On peut se demander dans quelle mesure le mouvement des idées dans l'Angleterre de plus en plus « anti-jacobine » qui entourait Chateaubriand a agi sur la genèse du « Génie du Christianisme ». Très attentif avant l'Essai à la tentative de diffusion des idées révolutionnaires (il connaît la Société Correspondante, Horne Tooke, Holcroft, Godwin [3]) il a dû s'intéresser de même aux manifestations anti-révo-

1. Of Chateaubriand's environnent at this time, M. Pierre Moreau writes : « Cette Angleterre où il vit est traversée d'un souffle religieux. Les apologies du Christianisme s'y multiplient. C'est pour la « conservation du Christianisme » — dit-on — que l'on fait à la Révolution une guerre sans merci ». (« Chateaubriand, l'homme et la vie, le génie et les livres », 1927).

2. Among the radical writings with which Chateaubriand may have been cognisant at this time, is a pamphlet by Gilbert Wakefield called the « Spirit of Christianity ». The first edition which appeared in 1794, was suppressed and it probably gained, in consequence, increased publicity on its next appearance. The writer deprecates the war with France as anti-Christian and as a quite ineffective means of crushing atheism and promoting Christianity (*Analytical Review*, Vol. 18, p. 325). Vide Suprà, p. 5, note 1.

3. In a note on the « fameux système de perfection » Chateaubriand says in the « Essai Historique », chap. XIV : « Ce système ... sur lequel toute notre révolution est suspendue, n'est presque point connu du public. Les initiés à ce grand

lutionnaires de tout genre qui se succédaient dans tous les genres de la pensée anglaise ». (*R. H. L.* Vol. 14, p. 612, note 1).

Apart from definite works on religion of which we shall give an account in the next chapter, there are two other evidences of the new spirit in England with which we will deal here. The first is in a letter from a certain Joseph Hardcastle in London to an ecclesiastic in Switzerland, preserved in the library of the Faculté de Théologie, Lausanne. It was written on the 11 March 1800, and suggests the publication of a large number of New Testaments for distribution in France. They were to be preceded by a preface containing a defence or apology of the Christian religion and were intended for religious propaganda in France. The writer emphasises the fact that the New Testament is the book that is most required at the moment. (*Revue de l'Eglise de France*, t. IX, p. 63). It looks as if this attempt to restore the Faith in France might be linked up with the enterprise of Ballanche a little later. Sainte-Beuve says : « M. Ballanche qui, de compagnie avec son père, s'occupait de réimpressions d'ouvrages classiques et religieux, d'une édition de « la Poésie Sacrée » de Lowth, vint à Paris en 1801 ou 1802, quelques mois après la publication « du Sentiment ». Il alla voir tout aussitôt M. de Chateaubriand dont le « Génie du Christianisme » avait paru et lui proposa de donner une Bible Française avec des discours. Les discours devaient être de M. de Chateaubriand et dans le texte français qui aurait été en gros celui de M. de Saci, M. Ballanche aurait infusé tous les passages des Écritures qui se trouvaient traduits par Bossuet et d'autres grands écrivains ». (Quoted by G. Vauthier. *R. H. L.*, Vol. 29, p. 268). The proposition did not materialise, though it must have been considered seriously for a time by Chateaubriand, whom we find commenting passages of the Bible while secrétaire d'am-

mystère en dérobent religieusement la connaissance aux profanes. J'espère être le premier écrivain sur les affaires présentes qui aura démasqué l'idole. Je tiens le secret de la bouche même du célèbre Chamfort qui le laissa échapper devant moi un matin que j'étais allé le voir. Ce système de perfection a obtenu un grand crédit en Angleterre, parmi les membres de la Société Correspondante. MM. T. et H. (*a*) paraissent en avoir adopté les principes, de même que l'auteur du Général Justice (*b*), livre (quelle que soit d'ailleurs la différence entre mes opinions et celles de l'auteur) qui annonce des vues peu communes en politique. On trouvera tout ce qui a rapport à cet intéressant sujet dans la 2e partie du 5e livre de cet Essai ».

(*a*) Messrs Tooke et Holcroft.

(*b*) Wm. Godwin, author of *Political Justice*.

bassade in Rome in 1803. Perhaps it was felt by all concerned that anything further that could be said on the subject of religion would be superfluous after the brilliant apology contained in the Génie du Christianisme.

The second piece of evidence of current religious thought in Engand is in the subjects set for competition at the University of Cambridge. M. Chérel (*R. H. E. F.*) gives the following translation of the latin title of a prize essay for the year 1801 : « Pourquoi depuis plusieurs siècles, les sciences et les beaux-arts n'ont-ils été en rigueur que dans les contrées du globe où le Christianisme est établi ? » [1]. It is the subject for one of the dissertations in Latin for the « Members' Prizes » for 1801, which we find in Pott's Liber Cantabrigiensis (*Pt.* I, p. 186) as : « Quid sit causae cur jam per plura secula scientiae et Liberales Artes non nisi in christianis populis floruerint ? » Since the year 1752, the members of parliament for the University have given four yearly prizes of fifteen guineas each to two senior and two junior bachelors of art for the best dissertations in Latin prose. The above subject appears to have been chosen for the junior essay and the prizes were awarded to Henry Vincent Bayley and George Doyley [2]. It is significant that the subject for the Cambridge Norrisian prize [3] of the previous year bears on a like topic : « The Christian religion has in its effects been favourable to human happiness » or to quote the essay of an unsuccessful candidate, « that Christianity has promoted the happiness of man as an intellectual moral and social being » (Cat. of Cambridge Books between 1700-1800). The prize winner was the Rev. Thomas T. Thomason and his essay was published in 1800. As the subject of the essay was given out in November 1799, it is worth noting that Thomason was engaged on his treatise just at the moment when Chateaubriand was reshaping « l'opuscule sur la Religion » that was to become « Le Génie du Christianisme ».

In Thomason's essay there are a few points of resemblance

1. See also P. M. Mason. *La Religion de J.-J. Rousseau*, tome 3, p. 274.

2. After taking orders, Geo D'oyley became select preacher and Hulsean Christian advocate at the University. He was a well-known theologian and made his name in the famous controversy with Sir Wm. Drummond who maintained in « Œdipus Judaicus » that much of the Old Testament was allegorical (Dic. Nat. Biog.).

3. The Norrisian prize was founded by John Norris of Witton, Norfolk, who left an annuity of £120 for a divinity professor in Cambridge and an annual prize of £12 for an essay on a sacred subject. The prize was first awarded in 1780.

with the « Génie » which may be due to hazard but cannot be ignored. In part IV, book VI, chapter 2, « Hôpitaux » opens with an address on the Christian virtue of charity : « La charité, vertu absolument chrétienne et inconnue des anciens, a pris naissance dans Jésus-Christ ; c'est la vertu qui le distingue principalement du reste des mortels et qui fut en lui le sceau de la renovation de la nature humain. Ce fut par la charité, à l'exemple de leur divin maître, que les apôtres gagnèrent si rapidement les cœurs et séduisirent saintement les hommes. Les premiers fidèles, instruits de cette grande vertu, mettaient en commun quelques deniers pour secourir les nécessiteux, les malades, les voyageurs ; ainsi commencèrent les hôpitaux. Devenue plus opulente, l'Eglise fonda pour nos maux des établissements dignes d'elle. Dès ce moment, les œuvres de miséricorde n'eurent plus de retenue ; il y eut comme un débordement de la charité sur les misérables jusque alors abandonnés, sans secours, par les heureux du monde. On demandera peut-être, comment faisaient les anciens qui n'avaient point d'hôpitaux ? Ils avaient pour se défaire des pauvres et des infortunés deux moyens que les chrétiens n'ont pas ; l'infanticide et l'esclavage ».

Thomason praises the immense charity of the early Christians too, and gives exemples of their kindness to the sick and infirm : « The history of Christianity during the first ages presents us with an astonishing spectacle; it exhibits to us a community of persons united in the strictest bonds — all engaged to promote the happiness of their fellow creatures, to the utmost of their power. We behold a charity unlimited in its operation, patient in its exercice — occasionally disarming the fury of its enemies — and attracting the admiration of all. This universal liberality, says a learned writer, made the strongest impression on men's minds and we may almost say that Christianity owes its establishment as much to the miracles of charity, as to the miracles of power' » (p. 39).

And further on he says : « It has been the character of the Christian in all ages that he exerts himself upon principles of the most enlarged humanity, to visit the sick, to relieve the necessities of the poor, to comfort the afflicted, to clothe the naked and to feed the hungry... If we look around us we may now behold the effects of the Christian spirit in the various charitable

institutions which have been founded in those countries where this religion is established » (pp. 42-43).

As in Chateaubriand, we find a reference here, also, to infanticide and slavery. « To Christianity we are indebted for the abolition of the barbarous custom of exposing new-born infants, destroying female children, murdering aged parents and slaves when incapacitated by infirmity from their wonted labours » (p. 24).

It would be rash to infer from such general points of resemblance, that either writer knew the other's work but it is clear that both reflected a current of thought prevalent in England at that time. Still under the spell of his literary associations in Suffolk, Chateaubriand had, no doubt preserved the mark of his conversations with the Rev. Mr. Ives, the Rev. Bence Sparrow and perhaps, too, with the Rev. Mr. Lang. Girdlestone, the enthusiastic hellenist of the Fauconberge school, all of whom were probably imbued with the new ideas on religion that had received the sanction of Cambridge. For the student, Thomason, the influence of his professors would most likely predominate. The Norrisian professor between 1795 and 1815, was the Rev. Jas. Fawcett, and candidates for the Norrisian prize were required to follow at least twenty of his lectures. He read with his students Pearson's « Exposition of the Creed » and discussed in detail the Evidences of Christianity (Cambridge Univ. Calendar 1802). We know, too, that as Lady Margaret's preacher, he delivered on 5 nov. 1794, at St. Mary's Church, Cambridge, a sermon on the « beneficial effects of Christianity ». In that sermon, he referred to the vices and excesses that religion forbids but cannot prevent, « now part of the offence and part of the woe must belong, not only to those who by their unworthy deeds have given great occasion to the ennemies of the Lord to blaspheme, but to those also, who though perfectly sensible of the argument we are considering, have yet so artfully confounded the public history of the church with the genuine effects of religion, and the spirit of superstition and fanaticism with the *genius* of *christianity* that it is not every careless reader who will perceive or attend to the distinction between, however obvious and however necessary » (Sermons of Powell et Fawcett). In the following year when Fawcett became divinity professor, he set as subject for the Norrisian essay, « that the holy Scrip-

tures rightly understood do not give encouragement to Enthusiasm or Superstition »[1] (Pott's L. C.), which shows a certain correspondence with the theme of his sermon. It is not extravagant to infer then, that there was some such reflection of his lectures in the subject chosen for the prize essay in the year 1799, and that Thomason wrote again under the inspiration of his divinity professor.

If the importance and excellence of the Christian religion was a matter of such frequent discussion in academic and literary circles in England, how much more likely was it to be a subject of interest among the Émigrés ! We learn from the Mémoires of the period that the social gatherings of the French exiles were frequented not only by distinguished English laymen, but also by leaders of the Anglican Church[2]. These latter had, no doubt, entire sympathy with the pious belief of their French friends in the speedy restoration of the cult in France. The journals and letters of the time abound in testimonies of the strength of this conviction among the Émigrés. The évidence is so convincing that M. Baldensperger is forced to conclude : « Il est donc certain que dans le milieu dont Chateaubriand s'est rapproché en 1797 la nécessité sociale de la religion est une sorte d'article de foi, et que la persistance des dispositions catholiques chez un grand nombre de Français y semble assurée » (*Études d'Histoire Littéraire*, S. II, p. 122).

In the Emigrant press, a compaign in favour of religion begins to make itself felt above the dust and turmoil of political controversy. Montlosier, with whom our poet has begun to associate, is in the van of the fight. As early as January 1798, he writes an article in the « Courier de Londres » entitled: « Des Ressources supposées dans l'Influence de la Religion », gently exhorting his companions in exile to seek consolation for their suffering in the pious practices of religion. So far removed is the spirit of his advice from the counsels of despair of the famous

1. The Prize for this Essay was also won by T. T. Thomason (1795).

2. « Mme A. était bien éloignée de toutes ces futilités. (Les futilités de toute une partie de l'Émigration F. B.). Sa maison était le rendez-vous des membres les plus illustres du clergé, de la noblesse, de la magistrature, martyrs de la foi, de l'honneur et de la vertu ; quelques orateurs célèbres des dernières assemblées, des écrivains de talent, proscrits de France, vinrent plus tard augmenter l'intérêt de ces réunions, auxquelles prenaient part aussi plusieurs anglais de distinction et des membres de l'église anglicane ». (Valery, Sainte-Perine : *Souvenirs contemporains*, quoted by F. Baldensperger : *Études d'Histoire Littéraire*, S. 2, p. 119).

« Aux Infortunés » of the « Essai » that it seems to be a fortetaste of the Génie itself. This is how be ends his homily : « Qu'elle [la religion] fasse le bonheur des âmes douces et pieuses, que l'infortuné dans l'oppression y retrouve de la consolation et du courage, que, pour tous, elle soit un objet d'admiration et de respect, c'est le vœu de tout homme honnête et sensé ». Spending his days with two such fervent supporters of the Religious Revival as Montlosier [1] and Fontanes, it is not surprising that our author took on some of their enthusiams and considering what we now know of the real Chateaubriand of the « Essai sur les Révolutions », the composition of the Génie du Christianisme no longer seems a contradiction of the former work, but the most natural outcome of the writer's intellectual development.

11. For the intimacy of Chateaubriand and Montlosier, See A. Bardoux : *Le Comte de Montlosier et le Gallicanisme.*

CHAPTER III

The theme of the « Génie du Christianisme » in sermons and religious writings in England.

The religious movement in Cambridge which synchronised with the composition of the « Génie du Christianisme » was no new growth called forth by the changed conditions following the French Revolution. It had its roots far back in the century and was an offspring of the controversy in which moralists and theologians had engaged against Deism. It was in direct line with the disputes of the first half of the 18th century when « Infidelity » was rampant. Reaching its highwater mark in 1730 with Tindal's « Christianity as Old as Creation », Deism lost much of its vigour and began to decay after 1740, but for Mr. J. M. Robertson (*History of Free Thought*) this decline was only apparent and was to be attributed to the direction of energy into new channels. England was entering on a period of great industrial and imperial expansion when mercantile and political interests were to absorb all her attention for many years to come and draw her thoughts away from problems of belief. While a religious revival took place among the new industrial population under the influence and teachings of the Wesleys and Whitefield, and a wave of pietism swept through the masses, Deism remained a living force with the educated classes. An orthodox German observer, making a close inquest about 1750, cites the « British Magazine » as stating in 1749 « that half the educated people were then deists and he, after full enquiry agrees » (*H. F. T.*, II, p. 166). Fifteen years later, we find « Diderot recounting on the authority of D'Holbach, who had just returned from a visit to this country that the Christian religion is nearly extinct in England. The deists are innumerable ; there are almost no atheists ; those who are so, conceal it » (*H. F. T.* II, p. 172).

In literature, Deism was represented by Hume, Smith, the posthumous works of Bolingbroke and the historical writings of Gibbon, who was introducing rationalist methods into church history. With the translations of Voltaire and the « Encyclopé-

distes », which were eagerly read by an ever-increasing public, free-thought took on new life in England. Never before had Christianity been attacked with such artistry and skill as in the works of Voltaire, who furnished single-handed a whole library for the Rationalist movement. While in France, ideas of freedom were closely connected with liberty of thought, and the revolutionary doctrine was mainly propagated by free-thinkers, such a connection was unknown in England, where the new social doctrines met with little favour [1]. It was not till free-thought became democratised and associated with political freedom through the writings of Godwin and Paine, that the upper classes became alarmed and began to beat a retreat. The climax was reached with the French Revolution, which to the casual observer seemed to be the direct outcome of the teachings of the philosophers. « In the vast panic which followed on the French Revolution, the multitude of mediocre minds in the middle and upper classes formerly deistic or indifférent, took fright at unbelief as something now visibly connected with democracy and regicide, and orthodoxy became fashionable on political grounds just as scepticism had become fashionable at the Restoration » (*H. F. T.* II, p. 179). Infidelity being now discredited among the aristocracy, Church leaders and orthodox thinkers made a fresh effort to strengthen their positions and religious treatises and pamphlets that had never ceased to flourish during the century, literally swarmed in the last decade [2]. The battle in the first days of the controversy had been round the content of the faith, but in the second phase, attention was focused on the Christian Evidences. That the interest of the

1. « The social order in England was not ripe for a revolution; but even had it been so, it is probable that the Gospel according to Rousseau would have required some modification to fit it to English tastes. » (L. Stephen: *History of English Thought in Eighteenth Century*, p. 194).

2. « Partout en Europe, dans les gouvernements et dans l'opinion publique, on assiste à un visible retour vers les principes religieux; et l'effroi qu'à causé notre Révolution l'accélère. L'Angleterre surtout cette Angleterre où Chateaubriand vient d'arriver en 1793 ne ressemble plus à celle des Lettres Philosophiques; elle est redevenue ou va redevenir, un pays de pensée chrétienne. On le constate: L'Angleterre, écrit en 1801 un rédacteur des Etrennes Religieuses, l'Angleterre qui avait produit tant de livres impies, a vu sortir de ses presses un grand nombre d'ouvrages consacrés à la défense de la religion; les apologies du Christianisme s'y multiplient; telle société de propagande religieuse se vante d'avoir distribué dans le pays rien de moins que 137.654 exemplaires de Bibles, psautiers, manuels de dévotion et livres édifiants ». (P. M. Masson: *Idées de J.-J. Rousseau sur la Religion*, III, p. 273).

subject was not quickly exhausted, may be seen from the number of treatises that appeared.

DODDRIDGE, Philip : Evidences of Christianity 1742-43
JORTIN, John : On the Truth of the Chrstian Religion 1746
WATSON, Dr R. : An Apology for Christianity 1776
BEATTIE, Jas : Evidences of the Christian Religion 1786
Essays on the Evidences and Influence of Christianity (Bath) 1790
FAWCETT, Jas : Effects of Christianity beneficial 1794
PALEY, William : Evidences of Christianity 1794
WATSON, Dr R. : Sermon in Two Apologies 1795
SEED, Rev. Jer. : Short View of the Evidences 1796
PRIESTLEY'S : Memoirs 1795
FAWCETT, Rev. J. : Summary of Evidences 1797
WILBERFORCE, William : Practical View of Christianity.... 1797
SIMPSON, Rev. D. : Plea for Religion 1797
FULLER, Andrew : The Gospel its Own Witness 1799
PORTEUS, Dr Beilby : Summary of Evidences 1800

Such a list, though far from complete, gives an adequate idea of the abundant material, Chateaubriand had at hand for his apology. Much of his theme is, in fact, to be found in these works and especially that part which deals with social reform [1]. English apologists laid particular stress on the ameliorative effects of Christianity and boasted of its continued success in redressing the evils of the past. But despite evidence to the contrary, Mr. J. M. Robertson holds that the advocacy of these improvements belongs to the rationalist party. « It is notable », he says, « that most of the humanitarian ideas of the latter half of the century, the demand for the reform of criminal treatment, the denunciation of war and slavery, the insistence on good government and toleration of all creeds are more definitely associated with the free-thinking than with any religious party excepting perhaps the laudable but uninfluential sect of quakers » (*H. F. T.* II, p. 222). Yet such ideas are an almost threadbare topic in the

1. M. Louis Reynaud in a recent work, « Le Romantisme, Les origines Anglo-Germaniques » denies the influence of English, polemic literature on Chateaubriand. For him the reawakening of catholic sentiment in the author of the Génie is due purely to imaginative sources, more especially to Milton, Young and Bernadin de St-Pierre. « L'auteur du Génie du Christianisme », he says « continue un mouvement d'origine toute littéraire qui a sa source dans un *réveil de l'imagination, non de la foi* et qui nous vient d'Angleterre. » This as we shall see, is going a bit too far.

Apologies of the time and are to some extent re-echoed by Chateaubriand in the « Génie ».

In Paley's *Evidences* (1794), which is the standard work of its kind, we read : « the effects of Christianity..... have been important. It has mitigated the conduct of war the treatment of captives. It has softened the administration of despotic or nominally despotic governments. It has abolished polygamy. It has restrained the licentiousness of divorces. It has put an end to the exposure of children and the immolation of slaves. It has suppressed the combats of gladiators and the impurities of religious rites. It has banished, if not unnatural vices, at least the toleration of them. It has greatly ameliorated the condition of the laborious part, that is to say, of the mass of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest. In all countries in which it is professed, it has produced numerous establishments for the relief of sickness and poverty and in some, a regular and general provision by law. It has triumphed over the slavery established in the Roman Empire ; it is contending and I trust will one day prevail against the worst slavery of the West Indies ». (*Evidences* II, p. 379). For the Norrisian professor, James Fawcett, there is the same abhorrence of social evils and the same confidence in the salutary influence of religion. « If the worst effects » he says, « have been in these latter ages either totally removed or in part at least disarmed of their power and virulence, if the cruelty of tyranny be abated, if the subject can repose in security beneath the rod of arbitrary sway and the voice of humanity be heard amidst the shout of battle, if the institution of domestic servitude which overspread the whole ancient world have been entirely abolished from these kingdoms and be comparatively at least, but little known in most parts of Christian Europe, if the guilty commerce which has so long desolated one quarter of the globe, have been strenuously, though, hitherto, with grief it must be owned, not very successfully attacked by the generous efforts of wise and good men, supported by an almost unexampled concurrence of all ranks and parties ; to what cause can we have recourse, unless to the more diffusive prevalence of the liberal and benevolent spirit which breathes through the Christian system of religion ! » (Sermons 1794). In a similar strain writes Archdeacon Jortin, one of Chateaubriand's

acknowledged authorities. « In the gentile world, men were loose and unsettled in their principles, hence it came to pass that impurities of all sorts were scarcely reckoned faults among them ; that they made no scruple of exposing infants, that they were cruel and inhuman towards slaves and prisoners and that they had public shows in which men were obliged to fight with wild beasts and to murder each other for the entertainment of the assembly..... Christianity hath in no small degree removed these enormities. It hath abolished polygamy and thereby made the conditions of millions far more easy than it would have been..... It has had some influence upon the civil laws of nations and made them in several respects more gentle and more merciful..... It has been the cause of many public charities and has provided for the education of the ignorant and for the relief of the sick and needy » (*On the Truth of the Christian Religion*, pp. 134-140).

However familiar and commonplace these ideas appear in their original setting, they assume a new brilliancy when woven into the fabric of the Génie and can often only be discovered with difficulty, in the intricacy of its pattern [1]. It is this power of transforming his materials and giving them new life which is Chateaubriand's peculiar magic and of which M. Giraud writes in a recent article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (25 oct. 1926) : « Il y a un art de citer et l'auteur du Génie le pratique à merveille. Tantôt il emprunte certaines indications — faits, sentiments ou idées, expressions mêmes — à tel ou tel ouvrage, parfois à deux ou trois ouvrages différents et il groupe ces indications éparses dans une même phrase ou dans une même page, ici abrégeant, là développant, ici supprimant tel détail oiseux, là ajoutant une métaphore, transposant un membre de phrase et même, quand il suit le plus près un texte étranger, arrivant à donner l'impression d'une création originale ».

1. « Génie du Christianisme » VI. IV. 2. » La charité, vertu absolument chrétienne et inconnue des anciens, a pris naissance dans Jésus-Christ ,etc. » See Chap. II, p. 22 supra, for whole quotation ; and *G. du C.* VI. IV. 13. « Les anciens admettaient l'infanticide et la dissolution du lien du mariage qui n'est en effet que le premier lien social..... La pudeur et l'humanité n'étaient pas mises au rang des vertus ; la classe la plus nombreuse était esclave ; les sociétés flottaient éternellement entre l'anarchie populaire et le despotisme ; voilà les maux auxquels le christianisme apportait un remède certain, comme il l'a prouvé en délivrant de ces maux les sociétés modernes » etc.

Such is the effect of the chapter on the Life of Christ in the last division of the « Génie », derived in part at least from two polemics called forth by the religious controversy in England « On the Truth of the Christian Religion », by John Jortin [1] and « The Truth and Divine Origin of the Christian Revelation » [2] by Beilby Porteus [3]. Though the latter work did not appear till the beginning of 1800, it could still serve as a source for the chapter entitled « De Jésus-Christ et de sa vie », now thought to have been composed after the author's return to France [4]. Chateaubriand does not quote it as an authority but he uses it as a guide in a way that is typical of his method. We know now that if much of his erudition was second-hand, he did not always neglect the originals and often made an intelligent use of first-hand sources. As M. Giraud says : « Il semble que Chateaubriand ne se soit pas contenté des citations toutes faites qu'il trouvait en d'opportuns répertoires, qu'il se soit souvent reporté aux textes originaux pour contrôler, rectifier et refaire les traductions, et qu'enfin s'il n'a évidemment pas lu dans l'original, et d'un bout à l'autre tous les in-folios de Pères grecs et latins, il en ait feuilleté ou compulsé un certain nombre » (*R. D. M.*, t. 35). In the first paragraph of the chapter on the Life of Christ, we have a good example of this ingenious but simple method. Chateaubriand makes a new text from the same material used by Porteus by going back to the original of two latin historians and quoting their exact words. « Vers le temps de l'apparition du Rédempteur sur la terre « he says », les nations étaient dans l'attente de quelque personnage fameux. « Une ancienne et constante opinion »

1. Referred to in a footnote by Chateaubriand as : « Fortin : on the Truth of the Christian Religion », clearly a misspelling for Jortin.

2. Translated into French and published by Dulau, Chateaubriand's London publisher in 1803.

3. Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London during the French Revolution, was a prominent figure in his time. He took an active part in trying to prevent the spread of the revolutionary doctrines in England, and in order to combat « infidelity », delivered, during four successive years beginning in 1798, in St-James's, Piccadilly a course of Lenten sermons which were attended by large crowds. « The church, long before the service began, was crowded to excess and the congregation consisted not only of the higher orders or of persons attached exclusively to the Church of England but of people in every rank and station of life and of almost every religious persuasion » (*Life of B. Porteus* by R. Hodgson, I, p. 133).

4. From the study of the variants of London, M. Giraud concludes that Part IV of « Génie » was only written after author's return to France in 1800. (See *Revue des deux Mondes*, octobre 1926).

dit Suétone, « était répandue dans l'Orient qu'un homme s'élèverait de la Judée et obtiendrait l'empire universel ». Tacite raconte le même fait presque dans les mêmes mots. Selon cet historien, « la plupart des Juifs était convaincus, d'après un oracle conservé dans les anciens livres de leurs prêtres, que dans ce temps-là (le temps de Vespasien) l'Orient prévaudrait et que quelqu'un sorti de Judée régnerait sur le monde ». With a slight addition from sacred history, Porteus gives the same information : « that there was about the time of the Saviour's birth a general expectation spread over the Eastern part of the world, that some very extraordinary person would appear in Judaea is evident, both from sacred history and from pagan writers. St. Matthew informs us that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea « there came wise men..... from the East saying : « where is he that is born king of the Jews ; for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him ? » In confirmation of this, two Roman historians, Suetonius and Tacitus assent that there prevailed at that time over the whole East, an ancient and fixed opinion that there should arrive out of Judaea a person who should obtain dominion over the world » (« The Truth of The Christian Revelation », published in Tracts, 1807, p. 433).

For another paragraph : « Le nouveau Testament offre des traces de cette espérance répandue dans Israël ; la foule qui court au désert demande à Saint Jean-Baptiste s'il est le grand Messie, le Christ de Dieu, depuis longtemps attendu », the material is in Jortin. « At the time of his appearance, there was a general expectation amongst the Jews of a Messiah. In the New Testament, mention is made of persons who waited for the consolation of Israel, who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, who thought that the Kingdom of God or of the Messiah should immediately appear. We find that it was the judgment of the learned also, of the chief priests and scribes. When John the Baptist entered into his ministry the Jews sent priests and levites to ask him whether he were the Christ. » (p. 172). Other details seem culled from the same source and the beautiful lines describing Christ's ministry on earth are a happy paraphrase of Jortin's picture of Our Lord. « Jésus-Christ apparaît au milieu des hommes plein de grâce et de vérité ; l'autorité et la douceur de sa parole entraînent.....

Pour inculquer ses préceptes, il choisit l'apologue ou la parabole, qui se grave aisément dans l'esprit des peuples ; c'est en marchant dans des campagnes qu'il donne ses leçons. En voyant les fleurs d'un champ, il exhorte ses disciples à espérer dans la Providence, qui supporte les faibles plantes et nourrit les petits oiseaux ; en apercevant les fruits de la terre, il instruit à juger de l'homme par ses œuvres. On lui apporte un enfant, et il recommande l'innocence ; se trouvant au milieu des bergers, il se donne à lui-même le titre de pasteur des âmes et se représente rapportant sur ses épaules la brebis égarée. Au printemps, il s'assied sur une montagne, et tire des objets environnants de quoi instruire la foule assise à ses pieds... Ceux qui observent ses préceptes et ceux qui les méprisent sont comparés à deux hommes qui bâtissent deux maisons, l'une sur le roc, l'autre sur un sable mouvant ; selon quelques interprètes, il montrait, en parlant ainsi, un hameau florissant sur une colline et au bas de cette colline des cabanes détruites par une inondation. Quand il demande de l'eau à la femme de Samarie, il lui peint sa doctrine sous la belle image d'une source d'eau vive ». (G. du C. III. III. 1.). Here are the scattered fragments of the text which Chateaubriand has moulded to his own use. « Eminent men are observed to have usually a style of their own. Whosoever examines the discourses of Our Lord with attention, may find in them a certain character and way of speaking peculiar to him. This manner, by which he may be distinguished, consists in raising matter of instruction and moral reflection from the things which were at hand, which presented themselves to his audience. Hence it is, that his sermon to the people and his conversation with his disciples allude perpetually to the time of the year or to the place where he was or to the objects surrounding or to the occupation and circumstances of those to whom he addressed himself or to the state of public affairs..... When he exhorted his disciples to trust in God, he bade them behold the fowls of the air, which were then flying about them, and were fed by divine Providence, though they did not sow nor reap, nor gather into barns ; he bade them take notice of the lilies of the field, which were then blown and were so beautifully clothed by the same power and yet toiled not like the husbandmen then at work. Being in a place whence they had a wide prospect of a cultivated land, he bade them observe how God caused the sun to shine and the

rain to descend upon fields and gardens even of the wicked and ungrateful ; and he continued to convey his doctrine to them under rural images, speaking of good trees and corrupt trees, of knowing them by their fruits, of wolves in sheep's clothing, of grapes not growing upon thorns, nor figs on thistles, of the folly of casting precious things to dogs and swine, of good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over ... and when he compared every person who observed his precepts to a man who built a house upon a rock, which stood firm and everyone who slighted his words to a man who built his house upon the sand, which was thrown down by the winds and floods, when he used this comparison 'tis not improbable that he had before his eyes houses standing upon high ground and houses in the valley in a ruinous condition which had been destroyed by inundations...

When the woman of Samaria wondered that he should ask water of her, he took occasion to represent his doctrine under the image of living water which flows from a spring... At the sight of little children he described once and again the innocence of the elect... Observing the fruits of the earth, he instructs them to judge of men by their fruits... We may also plainly see in the discourses of Jesus Christ his great design which was to instruct. Therefore he conveys knowledge in a familiar way, he adapts his language to his hearers, he speaks to their eyes and to their ears, he chooses images and comparisons which would strike them most powerfully and make a lasting impression on their minds » (pp. 229-246). There is no need to comment on the skill with which Chateaubriand compresses so much information into a few telling phrases. The hand of the master reveals itself in every line.

The next part of the chapter rests on a description of the character of Christ contained in the treatise by Beilby Porteus. Here the model is not so closely followed, but there is general correspondence in the traits singled out for admiration. « Les plus violents ennemis de Jésus-Christ n'ont jamais osé attaquer sa personne... Il n'y a point de philosophe de l'antiquité à qui l'on n'ait reproché quelques vices ; les patriarches mêmes ont eu des faiblesses ; le Christ seul est sans tache ; c'est la plus brillante copie de cette beauté souveraine qui réside sur le trône des cieux Pur et sacré comme le tabernacle du Seigneur, ne respirant que

l'amour de Dieu et des hommes, infiniment supérieur à la vaine gloire du monde ; il poursuivait à travers les douleurs, la grande affaire de notre salut, forçant les hommes par l'ascendant de ses vertus à embrasser sa doctrine et à imiter une vie qu'ils étaient contraint d'admirer. » There is the same praise of Christ's blameless life and absolute perfection in Porteus but the beauty of style so noticeable in the « Génie », is absent : « Whoever considers with attention the character of the Blessed Lord... will soon discover that it was in every respect the most perfect that ever was made known to mankind. If we only say of him what even Pilate said of him and what his bitterest enemies cannot and do not deny, that we can find no fault in him and that the whole tenor of his life was entirely blameless throughout, that is more than can be said of any other person that ever came into the world. But this is going a very little way indeed in the excellence of his character. He was not only free from every failing, but possessed and practised every imaginable virtue. Towards his heavenly father he expressed the most ardent love, the most fervent yet rational devotion and displayed in his whole conduct the most absolute resignation to his will and obedience to his commands. His manners were gentle, mild, condescending and gracious ; his heart overflowed with kindness, compassion and tenderness to the whole human race. The great employment of his life was to do good to the bodies and souls of men. In this, all his thoughts and all his time were constantly and almost incessantly occupied ». (*Op. cit.* pp. 43-49).

We find them both extolling the gentleness and kindness of Christ, his fortitude and resignation under trial, and his tolerance and moderation under provocation, especially at the time of his death. « Si le fils de l'Homme était sorti du ciel avec toute sa force, il eût eu sans doute peu de peine à pratiquer tant de vertus, à supporter tant de maux ; mais c'est ici, la gloire du mystère; le Christ ressentait des douleurs ; son cœur se brisait comme celui d'un homme ; il ne donne aucun signe de colère que contre la dureté de l'âme et l'insensibilité. Il répétait éternellement : « Aimez-vous les uns les autres ». « Mon père », s'écriait-il sous le feu des bourreaux, « pardonnez-leur, car ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils font ». « He endured the cruellest insults from his enemies with the utmost composure, meekness, patience and resignation ; displayed the most astonishing for-

titude under a most painful and ignominious death ; to crown all, in the very midst of his torments on the cross, implored forgiveness for his murderers in that divinely charitable prayer : « Father, forgive them for they know not what they do ». Nor is this, the whole of Chateaubriand's debt to the Bishop of London. When he speaks of Christ's teachings and moral law, he harks back again to the treatise on « the Truth of the Christian Revelation » and garners some of its ideas. « Il renverse les notions communes de la morale ; il établit des relations nouvelles entre les hommes, un nouveau droit des hommes, une nouvelle foi publique ; il élève ainsi sa divinité, triomphe de la religion des césars, s'assied sur leur trône et parvient à subjuguer la terre. Non quand la voix du monde entier s'élèverait contre Jésus-Christ, quand toutes les lumières de la philosophie se réuniraient contre ses dogmes, jamais on ne nous persuadera qu'une religion fondée sur une pareille base soit une religion humaine ». In a somewhat like manner, Porteus speaks of Christ's ministry on earth. « The doctrines he taught were the most sublime and the most important that were ever before delivered to mankind and every way worthy of that God from whom he professed to derive them, and whose son he declared himself to be. His precepts inculcated the purest and most perfect morality, his discourses were full of dignity and wisdom, yet intelligible and clear ; his parables conveyed instruction in the most pleasing, familiar and impressive manner... It appears then... that he was beyond comparison, the wisest and most virtuous person that ever appeared ; and even his bitterest enemies allow that he was so ». (*Op. cit.* pp. 43-49).

If Chateaubriand, « en grand artiste qui prend son bien partout où il le trouve, « has been able to give us pages of the most perfect prose the world has ever known, it is not always by virtue of the models he has chosen. Of most of the English polemics from which he drew inspiration, we might say what Leslie Stephen said of the sermons of the 18th century, « No one unless he were confined to a desert island with no other form of literature at hand, could really effect to read them with pleasure. Dull, duller and dullest are a sufficient critical vocabulary to describe their merits ». (English Thought in the 18th Century. II, p. 337). There is a dreary repetition of commonplaces without the slightest attempt to stir the imagina-

tion or appeal to the emotions. All speak vaguely of the beneficial effects of Christianity, of the abolition of slavery, infanticide, polygamy, divorce, of the advent of good government, humane warfare and of the establishment of charitable and educational institutions, but there are no concrete examples to enliven the argument or stimulate interest in the discourse. It must have been while reading these dry-as-dust treatises that Chateaubriand conceived the vast possibilities of thĕ subject viewed from the Catholic standpoint and visualised the poetic flights to which such a treatment might give wing. He must have seen that while illustrating the prosaic arguments of the Apologists with happy instances of Christian benevolence, he could recapture the glory of the ancient church, paint the early ages of Christianity in golden colours and reveal the beauty of Catholic civilisation throughout the centuries. To this suggestive rôle of the English polemists in the design of the « Génie », the words of M. Giraud are particularly apt : « Les inspirations qu'il puise chez ses devanciers lui sont surtout un moyen de mettre en branle son inspiration propre. » But it is not all, for, as we have seen, the matter and facts of these treatises are often carried over into the « Génie » and served up in a new guise. Yet there is no slavish imitation « et chaque transposition est création ». Chateaubriand stamps his genius on everything he touches and verifies his own words : « l'écrivain original n'est pas celui qui n'imite personne mais celui que personne ne peut imiter ».

CHAPTER IV

English divines and the « Génie du Christianisme ».

In a chapter called the « Years of Préparation » in her book on Chateaubriand and English Literature », Miss Miller discusses the English works known to Chateaubriand before 1800. Having divided them into four classes, books on travel, history, philosophy and miscellaneous subjects, she gives a list of some forty English authors with whom Chateaubriand was then acquainted, and comes to the conclusion that it was with the works of historical writers like Robertson, Hume and Smollet and the tales of explorers such as Bartram, Carver, Cook, Kolben and Bruce that he was mainly occupied during his exile. He was also strongly influenced by Ossian and Milton of whose poetry he acquired an intimate knowledge, and in a lesser degree by Gray, Young, and Hervey whom he had, also, already known in France. It was for the « Essai sur les Révolutions » that he began the study of philosophy and history and turned his attention to the English translations of Norse and Hindu literatures. A good deal of his knowledge of the Oriental world came from Sir Charles Wilkins, translator of the Mahabarata and other members of the English Society of Calcutta, with whose publications he was familiar, and it was probably the English translations of A. S. Cottle that introduced him to the two Eddas. Though Miss Miller bases her information on the references found in « The works of Chateaubriand which were completed or begun in England, » the « Voyage en Amérique », « Les Natchez », and the « Essai sur les Révolutions », she appears to have neglected the « Génie du Christianisme » [1], mainly composed before the author's return to France, and a potential field, therefore, for research of this kind. Consequently, she has omitted a type of work which, as we have seen, played an important part in the preparation of the « Génie », and has not taken into account the

1. Miss Miller it is true, examines the « Génie » for the influences of Ossian and Milton in a later chapter.

English polemic literature with which Chateaubriand seems to have made himself familiar in the last years of his exile.

Very wide awake to all that was happening around him [1], it was not likely that he should be indifferent to a topic which was to mean so much to him in the ensuing years as to become almost his sole interest. It was not only contemporary theologians and preachers like Porteus, Fawcett and Thomason that he laid under contribution for his new work, but also religious writers of previous generations. One of the most popular of these was Dr. Lowth (Bishop of London 1777-1787) whose work on Hebrew poetry was the vade mecum of controversialists and Bible commentators. Chateaubriand says in the « Génie » (II. v. 2) : « Le traité du docteur Lowth est entre les mains de tous les littérateurs » and it is reasonable to suppose that he includes himself in this category. At any rate, there is more than one trace of the learned bishop's influence in that part of the « Génie » which compares the Bible with Homer (Pt. II. Bk V.). We find the first point of contact in the comment on the famous passage in Genesis « Let there be light ». Here is Chateaubriand's impression : « On est merveilleusement étonné d'un bout de la Bible à l'autre. Qu'y a-t-il de comparable à l'ouverture de la Genèse ? Cette simplicité de langage, en raison inverse de la magnificence des faits nous semble le dernier effort du génie. « In principio creavit Deus cœlum et terram... Dixitque Deus : Fiat lux : et facta est lux. Et vidit Deus lucem quòt esset bona : et divisit lucem a tenebris ». On ne montre pas comment un pareil style est beau ; et si quelqu'un le critiquait, on ne saurait que répondre ; nous nous contenterons d'observer que Dieu qui voit la lumière et qui, comme un homme content de son ouvrage s'applaudit lui-même et la trouve bonne, est un de ces traits qui ne sont point dans l'ordre des choses humaines ; cela ne tombe point naturellement dans l'esprit » (*G. du C.* II, V. 1). Though there is a reminiscence of Bossuet [2] and possibly of another sacred writer, John Husbands,

1. « Sentant bien, et de plus en plus, que le livre qu'il préparait pouvait se prêter aux développements les plus originaux et les plus divers... il s'ouvre aux études les plus variées ; il se met à l'hébreu, consulte les bibliothèques et les gens instruits, ramasse sur toute sorte de questions d'histoire ou de littérature ancienne et moderne d'abondants matériaux ; surtout l'Angleterre contemporaine, sa vie littéraire, politique et sociale, ses villes et ses monuments... lui sont un sujet d'observation particulièrement précieux » (V. Giraud, *R. D. M.*, 15 octobre 1926).

2. See Note 20 in the « Génie ».

the main influence is of Lowth, who writes : « In the first place let me recall to your remembrance the solemnity and magnificence with which the power of God in the creation of the universe is depicted. And here, I cannot possibly overlook that passage of the sacred historians which has been so frequently commended, in which the importance of the circumstance and the greatness of the idea... is no less remarkable than the expressive beauty and simplicity of the language and God said « Let there be light and there was light ! » The more words you would accumulate upon this thought the more you would detract from the sublimity of it, for the understanding quickly comprehends the divine power from the effect and perhaps most completely when it is not attempted to be explained ; the perception in that case is the more vivid, inasmuch as it seems to proceed from the proper action and energy of the mind itself » (*Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, I ,p. 349). Here it may be noted how much nearer Chateaubriand is to the conciseness and brevity of the Scriptures than the more diffuse, though learned bishop of London.

When comparing the style of the Bible with that of Homer, Chateaubriand says : « La simplicité de la Bible est plus courte et plus grave, la simplicité d'Homère plus longue et plus riante. La première est sentencieuse et revient aux mêmes locutions pour exprimer des choses nouvelles. La seconde aime à s'étendre en paroles et répète souvent dans les mêmes phrases ce qu'elle vient déjà de dire » (II, Vol. 3.) ; he seems to turn the ideas of his source to a contrary use, applying Lowth's views on biblical style to that of Homer. Whether it is faulty remembrance of a long previously read text or an independent judgment it is hard to tell. « The Hebrew poets » says Dr. Lowth, « frequently express a sentiment with the utmost brevity and simplicity, illustrated by no circumstances, adorned with no epithets (which in truth they seldom use) ; they afterwards call in the aid of ornament, they repeat, they vary, they amplify the same sentiment and adding one or more sentences which run parallel to each other, they express the same or a similar and often a contrary sentiment in nearly the same form of words » (*Op. cit.* I, p. 100). And on the sententiousness of the Bible to which the author of the « Génie » also refers, he says : « The sententious style, therefore, I define to be a primary characteristic of

Hebrew poetry as being the most conspicuous and comprehensive of all. ... There are indeed many passages in the sacred writings highly figurative and infinitely sublime, but all of them manifestly assume a sententious form » (I. p. 99).

In the discussion of the style of the Book of Job, there are further resemblances between the two writers. « C'est dans Job » says Chateaubriand, « que le style historique de la Bible prend, comme nous l'avons dit, le ton de l'élégie, aucun écrivain n'a poussé la tristesse de l'âme au degré où elle a été portée par le saint Arabe, pas même Jérémie qui peut seul « égaler les lamentations aux douleurs » comme parle Bossuet. Il est vrai que les images empruntées de la nature du midi... conviennent singulièrement au langage et au sentiment d'un cœur malheureux, mais il y a dans la mélancolie de Job quelque chose de surnaturel... Dieu faisait composer par ses prophètes des cantiques funèbres dignes des morts chrétiens, deux mille ans avant que ces morts sacrés eussent conquis la vie éternelle. « Puisse périr le jour où je suis né et la nuit en laquelle il a été dit : un homme a été conçu ». Étrange manière de gémir ! Il n'y a que l'Écriture qui ait jamais parlé ainsi ». In Lowth we find the following description of the book of Job : « The most exquisite pathos is displayed, such indeed as has not been exceeded and scarcely equalled by any effort of the muses. Not only the force, the beauty, the sublimity of the sentiments are unrivalled but such is the character of the diction in general... that the Hebrew literature itself contains nothing more poetical... The first thing that arrests the attention of the reader in this passage is the violent sorrow of Job, which bursts forth on a sudden and flows from his heart where it had long been confined and suppressed : « Lest the day perish I was born in it (in which I was born) And the night (which) said a man is conceived » [1].

The next point of analogy occurs in the treatment of comparisons. Chateaubriand, in accordance with his plan, contrasts the images in Homer with those in the Bible. « Les comparaisons homériques sont prolongées par des circonstances incidentes ; ce sont de petits tableaux suspendus au pourtour d'un édifice pour délasser la vue de l'élévation des dômes, en

1. Translated by Lowth's commentator, Heath, as : « May the day perish wherein I was brought forth and the night which said : see, a man-child is born ! ».

l'appelant sur des scènes de paysages et de mœurs champêtres. Les comparaisons de la Bible sont généralement exprimées en quelques mots ; c'est un lion, un torrent, un orage, un incendie qui rugit, tombe, ravage, dévore. Toutefois, elle connaît aussi les comparaisons détaillées ; mais alors, elle prend un tour oriental et personnifie l'objet comme l'orgueil dans le cèdre, etc. ».

Lowth has a good deal to say on the same subject : « The Hebrews introduce comparisons more frequently perhaps than the poets of any other nation ; but the brevity of them in general compensates for their abundance. The ressemblance usually turns upon a single circumstance that they explain in the most simple terms, rarely introducing anything at all foreign to the purpose... Sometimes a single word and commonly a very short sentence comprehends the whole comparison. This peculiarity proceeds from the nature of the sententious style which is always predominant in Hebrew poetry and... consists in condensing and compressing every exuberance of expression and rendering it close and pointed. Thus, in the very parts in which other poets are copious and diffuse, the Hebrews on the contrary are brief, energetic and animated, not gliding along in a smooth and equal stream but with the inequality and impetuosity of a torrent. Thus their comparisons assume a peculiar form and appearance, for it is not so much their custom to dilate and embellish each particular image with a variety of adjuncts as to heap together a number of parallel and analogous comparisons, all of which are expressed in a style of the utmost beauty and simplicity » (I, p. 274). Though this is not the whole of our poet's debt to Lowth, the other borrowings rest on details so scattered throughout the two volumes of the bishop's work, that they could only, with difficulty, he sifted and established. What we have given, will show that the author of the « Génie » was no superficial student of the « Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews ».

Continuing his scheme of contrasts, Chateaubriand next treats of the sublime in the Scriptures and in Homer and his inspiration here, seems to be from another English source. « Enfin, le sublime dans Homère naît ordinairement de l'ensemble des parties et arrive graduellement à son terme. Dans la Bible, il est presque toujours inattendu, il fond sur nous comme l'éclair, vous restez fumant et sillonné par la foudre

avant de savoir comment elle vous a frappé. Dans Homère, le sublime se compose encore de la magnificence des mots en harmonie avec la majesté de la pensée. Dans la Bible, au contraire, le plus haut sublime provient souvent d'un contraste entre la grandeur de l'idée et la petitesse, quelquefois même la trivialité du mot, qui sert à la rendre. Il en résulte un ébranlement, un froissement incroyable pour l'âme, car lorsque, exalté par la pensée, l'esprit s'élance dans les plus hautes régions, soudain l'expression au lieu de le soutenir le laisse tomber du ciel en terre et le précipite du sein de Dieu dans le limon de cet univers. Cette sorte de sublime, le plus impétueux de tous, convient singulièrement à un Être immense et formidable qui touche à la fois aux plus grandes et aux plus petites choses ». An analogy to these lines occurs in a writer called John Husbands who published in 1731, a Miscellany of Poems [1] preceded by a preface, discussing the merits of Hebrew poetry. It is a source from which a good deal of the following chapter in the « Génie » (II, Vol. 4) seems to be derived also. « Not to insist on every particular » says Husbands, « there are two beauties in which the sacred scriptures excel all other books, I mean their simplicity and sublimity. Some circumstances need only be laid open to the reader to affect him. They fly all dress and adventitious ornament, their native beauty has sufficient charms, without the foreign aid of paint and embroidery. On the other hand, where a man's conceptions are very noble and exalted, the language will naturally rise in proportion to the subject. Sometimes... the simplicity of the diction makes the sublimity of the sentiment more conspicuous. If this be true as it certainly is, it proves how trifling the objections are against the sublimity of that celebrated passage in the first chapter of Genesis « Let there be light » ; for the sum of all that has been urged, amounts to this, that the passage cannot be sublime because the expression is simple which the reader may see fully answered by M. Boileau. The loftiness of the expression indeed frequently gives a new lustre and adds a sort of grandness and dignity to the thought. »

Ifthe paralled in the last instance is not very close, such is not the case in the next examples of correspondence between Chateaubriand and Husbands, both of whom deal with the bibli-

1. See in « Modern Language » Notes, vol. XXXVII, 1922, an article by J. S. Crane.

cal story of Joseph and his brethren in almost identical terms. « There are a thousand particulars », writes Husbands, « in the story of Joseph which deserve our notice and attention... His behaviour upon seeing his brother Benjamin is exceedingly moving. His bowels did yearn upon his brother and he sought where to weep and entered into his chamber and wept there ». Judah's speech to Joseph is very passionate. There is so much of the tender in his description of his father's grief should he lose Benjamin, so much of the generous in his offering to procure his brother's liberty by his own servitude, so much of the affectionate in the conclusion of his speech — « for how shall I go up to my father and the lad be not with me ? Lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come upon my father » — that he must be something more than man that could forbear weeping. Joseph we find, could not, he wants a passage for his affection ; joy and grief at once struggle in his breast ; his distress is pictured in his words ; « Then Joseph could not refrain himself but he wept aloud and said unto his brethren, I am Joseph, doth my father yet live ? » Concise, admirable eloquence ! On the other hand, what is the confusion of his guilty brethren ? They have not one word to reply to him, for they were troubled at his presence. Admirable silence ! Such silence is more expressive than all the language of the world ». Chateaubriand's treatment of this source is the characteristic one, of which we have already spoken. Not satisfied wih the scriptural quotations in Husbands, he goes straight to the originals, filling in his text with large extracts and giving the impression of an entirely new creation. This is what Husband's criticism has become in the « Génie ». « Ceux qui ont vendu Joseph, les propres pères de cet homme puissant, retournent vers lui sans reconnaître et lui amènent le jeune Benjamin qu'il avait demandé. « Joseph les salua aussi en leur faisant bon visage et il leur demanda : « Votre père, ce vieillard dont vous parliez, vit-il encore ? Se porte-t-il bien ? » Ils lui répondirent : « Notre père, votre serviteur, est encore en vie et il se porte bien ». Et en se baissant profondément ils l'adorèrent. Joseph, levant les yeux, vit Benjamin, son frère, près de Rachel, sa mère et il leur dit : « Est-ce là le plus jeune de vos frères dont vous m'aviez parlé ? Mon fils, ajouta-t-il, je prie Dieu qu'il vous soit toujours favorable ». Et il se hâta de sortir, parce que ses entrailles

avaient été émues en voyant son frère et qu'ils ne pouvait plus retenir ses larmes ; passant donc dans une autre chambre, il pleura. Et après s'être lavé le visage, il revint et, se faisant violence, dit à ses serviteurs : « Servez à manger »... Cette manière de demander des nouvelles d'un père, cette adorable simplicité, ce mélange d'amertume et de douceur, sont des choses ineffables, les larmes en viennent aux yeux et l'on se sent prêt à pleurer comme Joseph ».

Coming to the famous scene of recognition, Husbands continues his paraphrase thus : « The discovery of himself to his brethren is peculiarly beautiful. He causes everyone to depart, whilst he makes himself known to his brethren. How does he divide his affection among them ! He knows not where to begin, he knows not what to say. He has so much to speak, he cannot speak at all. Tears at length find a passage and he wept aloud... so loud that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard ; as soon as he recovers the use of speech, his first question is after the welfare of his father, though they had just before given him an account. Surely there is something wonderfully beautiful in the simple manner in which he first tells them, who he is, « I am Joseph, does my father yet live ? » And when he perceives their concern and shame, how tenderly does he again address himself to them. « Come near unto me, I pray you, I am Joseph your brother whom ye sold unto Egypt ». And lest that reflection should renew their concern, how does he endeavour to dispel their uneasy apprenhension by seeming to excuse their guilt. « Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither ; for God sent me before you to perserve a prosperity on the earth, so now, it was not you that sent me hither but God, etc. » See his fondness for his father and his brethren, especially his brother, Benjamin ! « And he fell upon his brother, Benjamin's neck and wept ; and Benjamin wept upon his neck ;... and he fell upon his father's neck and wept on his neck a good while ». In the « Génie », the same matter is given but it appears in a series of quotations from De Sacy's translation of the Bible, prefaced by the following : « Joseph, après avoir fait mettre une coupe dans le sac de Benjamin, ordonne d'arrêter les enfants de Jacob ; ceux-ci sont consternés ; Joseph feint de vouloir retenir le coupable ; Judas s'ofire en « otage pour Benjamin ». Then comes the

touching speech of Judah in which he tells of his father's love for his youngest son. Joseph is moved to tears and in a loud voice proclaims his identity. He warns his brother not to fear his anger and kisses them all tenderly. Comparing the recognition scene with that of Ulysses and Telemachus, Chateaubriand goes on to say : « La reconnaissance est mieux amenée dans le Genèse ; une coupe est mise par la plus innocente vengance dans le sac d'un jeune frère innocent ; des frères coupables se désolent, en pensant à l'affliction de leur père ; l'image de la douleur de Jacob brise tout à coup le cœur de Joseph et le force à se découvrir plus tôt qu'il ne l'avait résolu. Quant au mot fameux : « Je suis Joseph », on sait qu'il faisait pleurer Voltaire lui-même... Joseph parle à des frères qui l'ont vendu ; il leur dit seulement : « Je suis Joseph » et tout est pour eux dans ce nom de Joseph... « Il les appelle auprès de lui », car s'il a élevé la voix « assez haut » pour être entendu de toute la maison de Pharaon lorsqu'il a dit : « Je suis Joseph », ses frères doivent être maintenant les seuls à entendre l'explication qu'il va ajouter à voix basse : Ego sum Joseph frater vester, quem vendidistes in Ægyptum [1]. C'est la délicatesse, la générosité et la simplicité poussées au plus haut degré ; n'oublions pas de remarquer avec quelle bonté Joseph console ses frères, les excuses qu'il leur fournit en leur disant que loin de l'avoir rendu misérable, ils sont, au contraire, la cause de sa grandeur. C'est à quoi l'Écriture ne manque jamais de placer la Providence dans la perspective de ses tableaux... Enfin Joseph embrasse ses frères... mais il commence par Benjamin... « Et s'étant jeté au cou de Benjamin pour l'embrasser, il pleura ». C'est là la seule magnificence de style convenable en de telles occasions. »

If we have quoted at length on this subject, it was no more than necessary, to show the similarity of treatment in the two writers which is indeed striking. To mention only the most important points of resemblance, it will be seen that both refer to the tenderness of Joseph for his father and Benjamin, to the loudness of his weeping on hearing of Jacob's sorrow, should he lose Benjamin, to the simplicity and beauty of the expression

1. In a foot-note to another Bible quotation, Chateaubriand says : « nous nous servons de la traduction de Sacy à cause des personnes qui y sont accoutumées ; cependant, nous nous en éloignerons quelquefois lorsque l'hébreu, le Septante et la Vulgate nous donneront un sens plus fort et plus beau ».

by which Joseph reveals himself, to his anxiety to excuse the guilt of his brethren and to the share of Providence in the direction of his affairs. Though nowhere does Chateaubriand confess acquaintance with Husband's Preface, it is hard to imagine that such a close correspondence of thought was accidental and not founded on a knowledge of the text.

Less obvious is the imitation of another divine, Dr. Henry Felton, author of a « Dissertation on reading the Classics » (1710), in which we find in germ some of the ideas that have been developed in the « Génie ». Discussing the necessity of suiting our thoughts and their expression to the matter on which we are writing, Felton says : « We have no instances to produce of any writers that rise at all to the majesty and dignity of the divine attributes except the sacred penmen. No less than divine inspiration could enable men to write worthily of God and none but the spirit of God knew how to express his greatness and display his glory ; in comparison of these divine writers, the greatest geniuses and noblest wits of the heathen world are low and dull ». And having shown that even the most literal translation of the Scriptures surpasses any other writings, he adds : « Milton himself, as great a genius as he was, oweth his superiority over Homer and Virgil, in majesty of thought and splendour of expression to the Scriptures ; they are the fountain from which he derived his light ; the sacred treasure that enriched his fancy and furnished him with all the truth and wonders of God and his creation, of angels and men which no mortal brain was able either to discover or conceive and in him..... of all human writers, you will meet all his sentiments and words raised and suited to the greatness and dignity of the subject » (« On Reading the Classics », pp. 110-114). Such lines are not far removed from the argument of the « Génie » and might well find their place in its pages. One feels, too, in reading Chateaubriand's chapter on the superiority of Christian orators over the ancients that it has much in common, despite apparent contradictions, with the views of Felton on the same subject. We read in the « Génie » (III. IV. 1.) : « Les modernes doivent à la religion chrétienne cet art du discours qui en manquant à notre littérature, eût donné au génie antique une supériorité décidée sur le nôtre..... Les anciens n'ont connu que l'éloquence judiciaire et politique ; l'éloquence morale, c'est-à-dire l'éloquence de tout temps, de tout

gouvernement, de tout pays n'a paru sur la terre qu'avec l'Evangile. Cicéron défend un client, Démosthène combat un adversaire,... l'un et l'autre ne savent que remuer les passions et fondent leurs espérances de succès sur le trouble qu'ils jettent dans les cœurs. L'éloquence de la chaire a recherché sa victoire dans une région plus élevée... Dieu et la charité voilà son texte, toujours le même, toujours inépuisable ». If, unlike Chateaubriand, Felton finds that the Christian orators are inferior and make a bad use of the advantages of their position, it is because as an English protestant, he is not inspired hy the noble eloquence of a Bossuet or a Massillon and finds no counterpart in his own church. « Let me only propose, » says Felton, « a Christian orator and compare him with the orators of Greece and Rome to show your Lordship (D[r] Granby) the advantages we are possessed of and how greatly we may excel. If your Lordship reads the topics of Aristotle and Tully and observe how all their arguments are formed on the circumstances of things and drawn and enforced from the virtues and vices, the passions and inclinations of mankind ; you will see the whole compass their thoughts could be extended to and observe, that they have neglected no advantage to raise and beautify and enforce their arguments. But what a poor, barren field is this compared with the glorious harvest every Christian gathers in the scriptures. The treasures of Revelation are immense. ... with me the wonder is that our divines do not exceed the greatest orators of Greece and Rome as far as our topics of argument and persuasion are nobler and infinitely more forcible than theirs ; to argue for virtue by displaying her beauties and showing the reasonableness and convenience of the practice with no other encouragement than the secret satisfaction of having done worthily and well... was all the heathen could advance with any certainty in the cause, whereas the Christian is supplied with all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which God hath abundantly poured forth upon the world » (*Op. cit.*, pp. 217-220).

When Dr. Felton comes to the subject of history, and the merits of the Greek and Roman historians, he expatiates much in the same vein as Chateaubriand, in his chapters on the « Causes Générales qui ont empêché les Ecrivains Modernes de réussir dans l'Histoire ». Though the criticism of the indivi-

dual historians in the « Génie » bears no ressemblance to the English model, there is conformity of opinion in some general ideas. For instance, Felton remarks that history is the style in which it is hardest to obtain perfection, adding : « In all other subjects, there is a greater latitude and compass for the writer's thoughts, a larger field of fancy and imagination before him ; but in history he is confined to the facts and occurrences he relateth. And these, as they are not alike entertaining and ornamental in themselves, require great force and judgment in the narration to make them all agreeable. The worst province a historian can fall upon is a series of barren times in which nothing remarkable happeneth to awake our attention or engage our notice. Here the writer is becalmed and goes on a dull, smooth, sleepy pace, unless he hath spirit of his own to breathe into his subject and make it move with life, as well as truth, which must never be forsaken » (*Op. cit.*, pp. 223-224) ; while Chateaubriand comparing history and poetry, says : « Il n'en est pas des vérités comme des illusions ; celles-ci sont inépuisables et le cercle des premières est borné ; la poésie est toujours nouvelle, parce que l'erreur ne vieillit jamais et c'est ce qui fait sa grâce aux yeux des hommes ; mais, en morale et en histoire, on tourne dans le champ étroit de la vérité ; il faut, quoiqu'on fasse, retomber dans les observations connues » (*G. du C.* III. III 3) and attributes the failure of modern historians mainly to the dullness and uniformity of the periods they describe, and the lack of colour in their materials.

Such are the principal borrowings in the « Génie » from English divines but it must not be thought that in any single instance, there is exclusively one source. Chateaubriand was too great an artist to be satisfied with the opinions of one, or even two writers on any given topic. As we remarked before, he went about gathering material in every conceivable direction, often in the most unusual quarters, and having a remarkably retentive memory, was often able, as well, to apply his general reading to the subject in hand. It is not surprising to find him so well versed in English polemic literature when we remember his social connections in England, especially in Suffolk, where he spent a good part of his time in the company of protestant clergymen. It was to them he was indebted for a great many

of the books he used in the preparation of his works [1], as he acknowledges in one of the notes to the « Essai sur les Révolutions ». In the preface to one of the later editions of the « Génie », he apologizes for erroneous opinions on Catholic doctrine voiced in the (so-called) first edition, saying that he had to rely for his information on protestant authorities in England. On the whole, however, he is strictly orthodox and seems to have followed English divines only in matters where there was conformity of idea, and no controversy between the two churches.

1. The source of Chateaubriand's voluminous reading in London has not yet been determined, but it is just possible that he was one of those émigrés, who frequented the early reading-room of the British Museum, already open to a limited public after 1759. Mr. Rye (*Libraries of London*, 1927) says : « The French revolution led to a considerable increase in the number of readers and nearly half of those admitted in the year 1795 were French refugees ». May Chateaubriand not also have had access to the books of John Symmons at Paddington House, the cataloguing and care of which were in the hands of another French exile, Gauthier de Brécy ? Out of the 40.000 volumes in this collection, the librarian says : « il y en avait 7.000 ou 8.000 en langue française ; mon généreux Anglais les laissa à ma disposition et m'invita à les prêter aux émigrés ; ce qui fut pour eux comme pour moi une grande jouissance » (Gauthier de Brécy : *Révolution Royaliste de Toulon* 1793 ; Paris 1814).

CHAPTER V

Poets and poetical prose-writers and the Génie du Christianisme.

« Ossian and Milton » says Miss Miller [1], « are... consciously or unconsciously on the part of Chateaubriand, the chief English sources of his work », and of the two writers, we can safely say that the influence of the latter preponderates in the « Génie du Christianisme ». Mr. Ernest Dick, writing on the same subject [2], says : « Wollte man alle die Stellen des « Génie du Christianisme » anführen, die mehr oder weniger direkt aus Milton stammen, man müsste fast das halbe Werk auszitieren » ; and further on : « Milton ist der grosse alle andern überschattende Name des ganzen zweiten Teils des « Génie », « der Poétique du Christianisme ». Hier zeugt fast jede Seite von der schrankenlosen Begeisterung, die Chateaubriand dem Dichter entgegenbrachte ». If it is true that « Paradise Lost » is the most discussed topic of the « Poétique du Christianisme » where it is viewed under all its aspects as a Christian epic, it is not correct to say of the « Génie » as Miss Miller does, that « Milton exerted no influence upon it except in so far as he was the object of Chateaubriand's criticism ». Mr. Dick shows that Milton's influence is predominant throughout the whole book, that Chateaubriand is so saturated with the English poet's verse that he even borrows unconsciously from it at times ; and another critic [3] is of opinion that the conception of God, the universe, man, and nature in the « Génie » is entirely Miltonic.

To realise how preoccupied Chateaubriand was with Milton in the last years of his exile, we have only to examine the numerous borrowings from « Paradise Lost » that Mr. Baker has traced in the « Génie ». He finds points of contact in the chapter on « Redemption » (I. I. 4.), in the discourse on pride

1. « Chateaubriand and English Literature », p. 135.
2. « Chateaubriands Verhältnis zu Milton », Festschrift zum 14 Neuphilogentage (1910).
3. Mr. A. T. Baker : *The French Quaterly*, April July, 1909.

(I. II. 1.), in the description of the serpent (I. III. 2.), in the « Nouvelle Preuve du Péché Original » (I. III. 3.), in the famous song of the nightingale (I. V. 5.), in « Deux Perspectives de la Nature » (I. V. 12.), and finally in the « Dangers of Atheism » (I. VI. 5.). Mr. Dick sees still further ressemblances between the two works in the chapter on the Deluge (I. III. 4.), and in the chapter entitled « Jeunesse et Vieillesse de la Terré » [1]. (I. III. 5.), modelled on the celebrated seventh canto of « Paradise Lost ». And Mr. Baker is not even satisfied that his study is complete for he adds : « The indebtedness of » « Le Génie » to « Paradise Lost » is only partly worked out and though Parts II, III and IV contain so much that can have no reference to Milton's work, yet again and again when Chateaubriand requires a vivid image, it is to Milton that he turns ».

This imitation of style is even more important than the borrowings and possibly accounts for many of the daring expressions and « félicités de phrase » that are such a feature of the « Génie ». Far from being shocked like Voltaire [2] at such unusual combinations of words as « the darkness visible », « charmed silence », etc., Chateaubriand was quick to recognise their beauty and imitate their boldness. It is to them, probably, that we owe the conception of some of his own well-known figures of speech, « le jour bleuâtre et velouté de la lune », « le cou tendu et l'aile sifflante », « le cime indéterminé des forêts », etc. There was, in fact, a great affinity between the two poets and it is this bond of sympathy which explains the peculiar charm that Milton exercised on Chateaubriand throughout his life [3].

1. « Les Études de la Nature », pt. I. (B. de St-Pierre) are thought by M. Eugène Ritter to be another source of this chapter. (See *R. H. L.* vol. 28, 1921).

2. See Telleen : « Milton dans la Littérature Française », p. 115.

3. Mr. W. Wright Robert says : « the attraction for him of Gray, of Beattie, or of Ossian, is not to be compared to that of a poet, whose artistic nature was largely his own, whose personality even had much in common with his own and whom he admired passionately from those days when he first studied his life and works in exile to those of disappointed old age in which he beguiled his melancholy by translating into French the whole of « Paradise Lost » (« Modern Language Review », octobre 1910).

In spite of all that has been written about Milton and Chateaubriand, M. Louis Reynaud, a new commentator of the « Génie du Christianisme » is of opinion that the importance of the English poet's influence has not been sufficiently stressed and that a salient point has been overlooked. It was from *Paradise Lost*, he says, that Chateaubriand derived the main thesis of the « Génie du Christianisme », and what constitutes its great originality. The artist in him

The result of this close communion of spirit is especially apparent in the « Poétique du Christianisme ». Miss Miller is the first to show how Chateaubrand relied in his criticism of « Paradise Lost » on Addison's « Remarks on Milton », [1] but her examination does not reveal the closeness of that imitation. Not only does our poet borrow from the English critic and adapt his views, but he follows him in his scheme of criticism, giving the same quotations and singling out the same lines for admiration. Speaking of the subject matter of an epic, Addison says « that the characters of the « Iliad » and the « Aeneid » are to be commended because they are so nearly related to the people for whom they were written » and « Milton's poem is admirable in this respect since it is impossible for any of its readers, whatever nation, country or people he may belong to, not to be related to the persons who are the principal actors in it, but what is infinitely more to its advantage, the principal actors in this poem are not only our progenitors but our representatives » (*Remarks on Milton*, p. 25). Chateaubriand's version is very similar. « Le berceau de Rome chanté par Virgile est un grand sujet sans doute ; mais que dire d'un poème qui peint une catas-

awoke to the beauties of the Christian religion while reading Milton's sublime lines in praise of the Creation, and with that awakening came the idea of an entirely new form of apologetic, such as had never been conceived before. The English Homer, therefore, soars over the whole work but more especially over that part which is its essence, the « Poétique du Christianisme ». « Milton est comme l'âme vivante du livre apologétique de Chateaubriand. Il apparaît dès que celui-ci entre dans le vif de son sujet et il en remplit toute la partie essentielle, ces fameux chapitres qui traitent de la « poétique du Christianisme ». C'est lui qui est surtout invoqué lorsqu'il s'agit de frapper le coup décisif auquel ni Klopstock, ni Dante lui-même suffiraient d'établir la supériorité de la poésie née du Christianisme sur celle des Anciens. Pour la grandeur des caractères, la force des passions, la beauté des tableaux, le tragique des situations, seul Milton semble à Chateaubriand pouvoir éclipser les noms, consacrés par l'admiration des siècles, de Virgile et d'Homère. Enfin, le moment venu de choisir un « merveilleux » digne d'être opposé à la mythologie antique, c'est à Milton encore que Chateaubriand l'emprunte, théoriquement dans le « Génie », pratiquement dans les « Natchez » et les « Martyrs », où les réminiscences directes du « Paradis Perdu » abondent... C'est donc Milton qui apporte l'argument suprême, celui où Chateaubriand ramasse toute sa pensée. Du reste, sa vénération pour l'auteur du « Paradis Perdu » ne diminuera jamais. Elle est la seule peut-être qui l'accompagne pendant toute sa vie » (« Le Romantisme », pp. 15, 16).

Though M. Louis Reynaud brings many new suggestions to the discussion, he is not the first to point out Milton's paramount importance in the conception of the « Génie » and most of what he tells us, has already been seen before, if viewed perhaps from a different angle.

1. Miss Miller uses a French translation of Addison's work, made in 1767. There were two previous translations of these essays, one by Routh (1753) and the other by L. Racine (1755), with which she does not seem to be acquainted.

trophe dont nous sommes nous-mêmes les victimes, qui ne nous montre plus le fondateur de telle ou telle société, mais le père du genre humain » (II. I. 3).

Of Addison's comment on Adam's speech to the angel in which he describes his feelings after the creation : « There is no part of the poem more apt to raise the attention of the reader than this discourse of our great ancestor, as nothing can be more surprising and delightful to us than to hear the sentiments that arose in the first man while he was yet new and fresh from the hands of the Creator » (*Op. cit.*, pp. 137-138), we find an echo in Chateaubriand in « il retrace la première pensée de Dieu, manifestée dans la création du monde, et les premières pensées de l'homme au sortir des mains du créateur » (II. I. 3).

Adam's first realisation of a creator is the same in both authors : « Adam » says Addison, « then proceeds to give an account of his condition and sentiments immediately after his creation. How agreeably does he represent the first posture in which he found himself, the beautiful landscape that surrounded him and the gladness of heart which grew up in him on that occasion... Adam is afterwards described as surprised at his own existence and taking a survey of himself and of all the works of nature. He, likewise, is represented as discovering by the light of reason, that he and everything about him must have been the effect of some being infinitely good and powerful, and that being had a right to his worship and adoration. His first address to the sun and to those parts of the Creation which made the most distinguished figure, is very natural and amusing to the imagination. « Thou sun », said I, « fair light », etc » (pp. 139-140). Very close to this, are the remarks of Chateaubriand who also quotes the famous address to the sun. « Rien de plus auguste et de plus intéressant que cette étude des premiers mouvements du cœur de l'homme. Adam s'éveille à la vie. Les yeux s'ouvrent ; il ne sait d'où il sort. Il regarde le firmament... Il nomme naturellement ce qu'il voit ; il s'écrie : « Oh toi, soleil, et vous, arbres, forêts, collines, vallées, animaux divers »... Et pourquoi Adam s'adresse-t-il au soleil, aux arbres ? « Soleil, arbres », dit-il, « savez-vous le nom de celui qui m'a créé ? » Ainsi le premier sentiment que l'homme éprouve est le sentiment de l'existence d'un Être Suprême ; le premier besoin qu'il manifeste est le besoin d'un Dieu » (II. I. 2).

Of the reason for the creation of Eve, Addison writes : « Adam... describes a conference which he held with his Maker upon the subject of solitude... Adam urges, in this divine colloquy, the impossibility of his being happy though he was the inhabitant of paradise and lord of the whole creation without the conversation and society of some rational creature who should partake of those blessings with him » (p. 141). On this sublime conversation, Chateaubriand has also something to say, but he characteristically avoids reference to Adam's aversion to solitude. After all, is it not as the great protagonist of solitude that he has drawn some of his happiest inspirations ? « Dieu se manifeste à Adam ; la créature et le créateur s'entretiennent ensemble, ils parlent de la solitude. Nous supprimons les réflexions. « La solitude ne vaut rien à l'homme ». Adam s'endort. Dieu tire du sein même de notre premier père une nouvelle créature et la lui présente à son réveil ».

Describing Eve's conduct after the Fall, Addison tells us : « Eve afterwards proposes to her husband in the blindness of despair that to prevent their guilt from descending upon posterity, they should resolve to live childless, or if that could not be done, they should seek their own deaths by violent methods » (p. 166). And we find in the « Génie » (II. I. 3). « Adam la repousse ; Ève se jette à ses pieds, les baigne de larmes. Adam est touché, il relève la mère des hommes. Ève lui propose de vivre dans la continence ou de se donner la mort pour sauver sa postérité ». Addison, like Chateaubriand, refers to the unhappy ending of « Paradise Lost » but tries to prove that it is not altogether contrary to tradition. He finds that Milton has not been completely at fault because we see the overthrow of Satan and glimpse the future triumph of Adam. Chateaubriand, however, approves of Milton's sad ending and maintains that in another great epic, the « Iliad », the conclusion is equally tragic, for though Achilles achieves his aim, the destruction of Troy, the reader must mourn the fate of Hector and lament with the Trojan women. If the argument of the two critics is at variance, the mode of procedure is the same, and it is not too much to presume that Chateaubriand was inspired by the method of justification used in the « Remarks on Milton ». Though he has not « borrowed a whole mass of criticism from Addison », he has been a fairly faithful disciple and his views on Milton

are much more in the English spirit than those of previous French commentators, like Voltaire, Racine or Routh. He shows greater breadth of view in his judgments than any of his fellow countrymen and this may be attributed, in part, at least, to his deeper knowledge of English literature in general.

The next most powerful influence under which Chateaubriand fell, was that of Ossian, of whom he was an admirer from his youth. Though disillusioned as to the authorship of the tales [1], he is still full of enthusiasm for the « Northern Bard », at the end of his English period, for in 1800, he writes in the Lettre à Fontanes: « Je ne sors plus sans mon Homère de Western dans une poche et mon Ossian de Glasgow dans l'autre ». There are only three or four direct allusions to Ossian in the « Génie » [2], but there are numerous imitations of his style. The most striking are the examples of the Ossianic type of scenery, moss-covered rocks, heaths veiled in mist, wide expanses of land or sea, oak trees, torrents, lakes and mountains. There is the same feeling for solitude, sadness and the infinite, and the same love of contemplation and poetic revery. A touch of this Celtic atmosphere is perceptible in the well-known sea-scene in « Deux Perspectives de la Nature » (I. V. 12). « On avait surtout l'idée de l'étendue lorsqu'une brume légère rampait à la surface de la mer, et semblait accroître l'immensité même. Oh ! qu'alors les aspects de l'océan sont grands et tristes ! » And again in the beautiful description of the American forest in the same chapter : « Bientôt je vis le jour s'éteindre autour de moi et je goûtai dans toute sa solitude le beau spectacle d'une nuit dans les déserts du nouveau monde ». The imitation is more direct in the next quotation from « Instinct de la Patrie » (I. V. 14). « Demandez à un berger écossais, s'il voulait changer son sort contre le premier potentat de la terre... partout il redemande ses troupeaux, ses torrents, ses nuages. Il n'aspire qu'à manger du pain d'orge, à boire le lait de la chèvre, à chanter dans la vallée ces ballades que chantaient aussi ses aïeux... C'est une plante de la montagne, il faut que sa racine soit dans le rocher, elle ne peut prospérer si elle n'est battue des vents et des pluies ; la terre, les abris et le soleil la font mourir ».

1. See Essai sur les Révolutions ; chap. 37, foot notes.
2. Noted by Miss Miller : *Op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.

When Chateaubriand speaks of the migration of birds (I. V. 7), he gives the swallow, in true Ossianic fashion, a predilection for ruins and the glories of other days, « l'hirondelle frappe aux palais ; cette fille de roi semble encore aimer les grandeurs, mais les grandeurs tristes, comme sa destinée ; elle passe l'été aux ruines de Versailles et l'hiver à celles de Thèbes » ; and when strange birds arrive from other climes, he makes them alight on open heaths that ressemble in their bareness, the wind-swept plains where the Celtic heroes fought and sang : « ils descendent au milieu des bruyères dans un lieu découvert et dont on ne peut approcher sans être reconnu » (I. V. 7).

There seems to be a reminiscence of the Ossianic maiden in characteristic pose, sitting on a rock, beside the sea dreaming of her absent lover, in the following lines, partly inspired by the « Æneid » too : « Les tableaux de Virgile... représentent toute la nature, ce sont les profondeurs des forêts, l'aspect des montagnes, les rivages de la mer, où des femmes exilées regardent, en pleurant, l'immensité des flots » (II. II. 10) ; as also in the next quotation taken from the chapter on the effect of mythology on Nature (II. IV. 1) : « Il y a dans l'homme un instinct qui le met en rapport avec les scènes de la nature. Eh ! qui n'a passé des heures entières, assis, sur le rivage d'un fleuve à voir s'écouler les ondes ! Qui ne s'est plu au bord de la mer à regarder blanchir l'écueil éloigné ! »

In the religious procession described in « La Fête-Dieu » (IV. I. 7) the hermits or « solitaires » who march in front, seem to have come from the barren moors of Morven, « à pas lents s'avance sur deux files une longue suite de ces époux de la solitude, de ces enfants du torrent et du rocher dont l'antique vêtement retrace à la mémoire d'autres mœurs et d'autres siècles » ; and the adventures of the knight errant in the age of chivalry, are set in a blackground that would have suited the exploits of Fingal or Oscar. « Il allait par monts et par vaux, cherchant périls et aventures, il traversait d'antiques forêts, de vastes bruyères, de profondes solitudes » (IV. V. 4).

Tombs, lamentation and grief form the stuff of the Ossianic tales and are likewise a prominent feature in the « Génie ». Describing country marriages (I. I. 8), Chateaubriand says : « Les siècles, sortis de leurs tombeaux gothiques, semblent accom-

pagner cette jeunesse avec leurs vieilles mœurs et leurs vieux souvenirs » ; and in another place : « les tombeaux parmi les hommes sont les feuilles de leur histoire » (I. V. 6). The emigrant returning to his native land is struck by the fact that : « Là sont des tombeaux où étaient des palais, là des palais où étaient des tombeaux » ; and among the things which attach him to the « patrie » are : « le clocher de l'église... l'if du cimetière, le tombeau gothique » (I. V. 14). In the fourth part of the « Génie » there is a whole book devoted to tombs in which the gloomy Ossianic aspect is no less a feature than the religious element. If in the first chapter, the Christian point of view is stressed : « la religion a pris naissance aux tombeaux et les tombeaux ne peuvent se passer d'elle », not far away the Celtic influence appears : « L'homme ici-bas ressemble à l'aveugle Ossian, assis sur les tombeaux des rois de Morven ; quelque part qu'il étende sa main dans l'ombre, il touche les cendres de ses frères » [1] (IV. II. 5).

Since the usual concomitant of tombs is grief and melancholy, expressions of sorrow abound in the « Génie », just as in Ossian. It is the sadness and wistful beauty of solitude, that stand out so prominently in the famous description of the Savanna (I. V. 7). « La grandeur, l'étonnante mélancolie de ce tableau ne sauraient s'exprimer dans les langues humaines » ; and another mournful theme with a Celtic flavour, the gloom and depression engendered in man by the struggle of the spirit with matter, is what emerges from the following : « la double débilité mentale et physique des peuples du Nord et du Midi, la mélancolie dont ils semblent frappés, ne peuvent donc... être attribuées à une fibre trop relâchée ou trop tendue... Cette affection plaintive des habitants du pôle est une véritable tristesse intellectuelle produite par la position de l'âme et par ses combats contre les forces de la nature » (I. VI. 4). The inherent sadness of human life is again stressed in : « Tout a ses convenances et ses rapports dans la nature, aux fleurs les zéphyrs, aux hivers les tempêtes et au cœur de l'homme, la douleur ». (I. V. 9). Even in religion, the mournful side makes the strongest appeal to the author of the « Génie » : « elle a quelque chose de sérieux et de triste ; elle nous traîne à l'ombre des cloîtres et sur les mon-

1. A great part of this predilection for graves must be attributed also to the influence of the English « Poets of the Night and Tombs », Young Gray, Hervey, etc.

tagnes » (II. III. 8) ; and his preference for Christian oratory seems to be mainly due to its sadness : « ce qui distingue l'éloquence chrétienne de l'éloquence des Grecs et des Romains, c'est cette tristesse évangélique qui en est l'âme, selon La Bruyère, cette majestueuse mélancolie dont elle se nourrit » (III. IV. 1). Of the other features in the « Génie » that are generally regarded as of Ossianic inspiration, phantoms, voices of spirits and epic appellations, there are a number of examples, but they are hardly important enough to be noted in this short account. What we have shown will be sufficient to explain the impress Ossianic literature gave to the early outlook of our poet and the part it played in forming the mould in which his genius was cast.

However great the stimulus of Ossian in turning Chateaubriand's thoughts to gloom, it was not the only influence of the kind, to which he was subjected. As a student of eighteenth century literature in England, he was well acquainted with the chief representatives of melancholy, Young, Hervey and Gray [1]. Mr. Van Tieghem [2] has pointed out his indebtedness to the « Night Thoughts » for the subject of the death-bed of the Just Man and shown in how far Chateaubriand has improved on the theme, but this is not the whole of Young's influence on the « Génie ». The death-bed scene in Night II, is taken up again in the description of the dying Trappist [3] (IV. III. 6). Here the

1. There are several traces of the influence of the « Elegy » in the « Génie » especially in the chapter entitled « Cimetières de campagne ».

2. « La Poésie de la Nuit et des Tombeaux », pp. 93-98.

3. Could Chateaubriand have also had first-hand knowledge of the pious lives and edifying deaths of the Trappists? We read of him during his exile in England as tutor to a small boy who spent some of his time in a trappist convent. « Chateaubriand apprenait à lire à un petit neveu, Loquet de Blossac, lequel, à neuf ans, gagnait quelques sous par jour chez les trappistes à chasser avec une gaule les corbeaux qui dévastaient les récoltes » (Revue de Saintonge et de l'Aunis, tome XXIII, p. 35). The only trappists who came to England during the Revolution, were those accomodated by Mr. Weld on his estate at Lulworth castle not far from Weymouth. These monks were on their way to America, flying from France, but were so hospitably received in London that they decided to remain in this country. They arrived towards the end of July 1794. In « Dom A. de Lestrange et les Trappistes pendant la Révolution », we read : « Dès que leur présence y est connue, le comité anglais, quoique protestant, les range parmi les hôtes entretenus aux frais de l'Etat. Bien plus, on vient les prier de s'établir en Angleterre. Comment résister à de pareilles instances, accompagnées des offres les plus généreuses? Sir Thomas Weld, un des plus riches gentilshommes du pays, leur céda gratuitement un domaine stitué près de Lulworth, à quelques pas de son château et sur le bord de la mer. Ils y construirent un monastère, et l'An-

central idea, the lesson to be learnt from the death of the good man, is the same as in Young and its philosophy is nearer to that of the English poet than the musings in the chapter on Extreme Unction.

> « The chamber where the good man meets his fate
> Is privileged beyond the common walk
> Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven.
> Fly, ye profane ! if not, draw near with awe !
> Receive the blessing and adore the chance
> That threw in this Bethesda your disease ;
> If unrestored by this, despair your cure
> For here, resistless demonstration dwells ;
> A death-bed's a detector of the heart.
> Here tir'd dissimulation drops her masque
> Through life's grimace, that mistress of the scene !
> Here real and apparent are the same
> You see the man ; you see his hold on heaven.
> .....
> His conduct is a legacy for all.
> Richer than mammon's for his single heir
> His comforters he comforts, great in ruin,
> With unreluctant grandeur, gives not yields
> His soul sublime, and closes with his fate. »

Quite in the style of Young, who favoured declamatory verse, is Chateaubriand's rhetoric, with its full toll of notes of exclamation. « Quel spectacle que celui du trappiste mourant ! Quelle sorte de haute philosophie ! Quel avertissement pour les hommes ! Étendu sur un peu de paille et descendu dans le sanctuaire de l'église, ses frères rangés en silence autour de lui, il les appelle à la vertu, tandis que la cloche funèbre sonne ses dernières agonies. Ce sont ordinairement les vivants qui engagent l'infirme à quitter courageusement la vie, mais c'est une chose plus sublime, c'est le mourant qui parle de la mort. Aux portes de l'éternité, il la doit mieux connaître qu'un autre ; et

gleterre fut tout étonnée de voir germer sur son territoire une société d'hommes qu'elle avait naguère si rigoureusement proscrits » (p. 88).

It was perhaps during their sojourn in London while awaiting to take up their new quarters in Dorset that Chateaubriand's small pupil was in their employ. We learn from a Weymouth Guide that the place of retreat occupied by the Trappists on the Lulworth estate was near Bindon Abbey, where some farmhouses were converted into a monastery, in which they resided till they were able to build a suitable house. They returned to France in 1817, opening a monastery at Melleray, Nantes. (See *The Illustrated Guide to Weymouth* and *La Trappe in England*, 1852).

d'une voix qui résonne déjà entre des ossements, il appelle avec autorité ses compagnons, ses supérieurs même à la pénitence » (IV. III. 6). With this description, we must link up another death-bed scene in Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs ». Copied from Young's death of Philander, we have the same omission as in the original : « pas un mot de religion, pas une allusion à un rite quelconque ». The religion of the dying man is not defined. « Son chrétien » says Mr. Van Tieghem, « est le juste en général, à la rigueur, le philosophe spiritualiste, pas davantage » (*Op. cit.*). It is only with Chateaubriand that we get the Catholic death-bed with all its attendant devotions and ceremonies. The moribund in the « Meditations » as in the « Génie » and in the « Night Thoughts » « comforts his comforters » but his consolation is for this life. « I die, my dear children but God, the everlasting God will be with you. Though you lose an earthly parent, you have a father in heaven who lives for evermore. Nothing, nothing but an unbelieving heart and irreligious life can ever separate you from the endearments of his love » (p. 33) ; whereas Chateaubriand's monk only speaks of the future life, exhorting his companions to prepare for eternity.

There is one other point of contact between Chateaubriand and Hervey, which deserves attention. It is in a foot-note in the « Contemplations on the Starry Heavens » (p. 319) where the author is discussing the « Love of God in Jesus Christ » and the ransom paid for man. He speaks of the reluctance of the « principalities of heaven » to undertake the work of redemption and adds « Milton sets this thought in a very poetical and striking light. All the sanctities of heaven stand round the throne of the supreme majesty, God foresees and foretells the fall of man... the following enquiry is addressed to all the surrounding angels :

> « Say heav'nly powers where shall we find such love ?
> Which of you will be mortal to redeem
> Man's mortal crime ? and die the dead to save,
> He ask'd ; but all the heav'nly choir stood mute
> And silence was in heav'n. »

There is to me at least an inimitable spirit and beauty in the last circumstance. That such an innumerable multitude of generous and compassionate beings should be struck dumb with

surprise and terror at the very mention of the deadly forfeiture and ransom set. No language is so eloquent as this silence. Words could not possibly have expressed in so emphatical a manner, the dreadful nature of the task ; the absolute inability of any or all creatures to execute it ; the supereminent and matchless love of the eternal son in undertaking the tremendous work not only without reluctance, but unsought and unimplored with readiness, alacrity and delight ». There is not much in Hervey's note that does not appear in the « Génie ». Here is the French version : « Milton eut une belle idée, lorsqu'il supposa qu'après le péché, l'Éternel demande au ciel consterné s'il y avait quelque puissance qui voulut se dévouer pour le salut de l'homme. Les divines hiérarchies demeurèrent muettes et parmi tant de séraphins, de trônes, d'ardeurs, de dénominations, d'anges et d'archanges, nul ne se sentit assez de force pour s'offrir au sacrifice. Cette pensée du poète est d'une rigoureuse vérité en théologie. En effet, où les anges auraient-ils pris pour l'homme l'immense amour que suppose le mystère de la croix ? Nous dirons, en outre, que la plus sublime des puissances créées n'auraient pas même eu assez de force pour l'accomplir... si le Fils de l'Homme lui-même trouva le calice amer, comment un ange l'eût-il porté à ses lèvres ? Il n'aurait jamais pu boire la lie, et le sacrifice n'aurait point été consommé ». Except for these two instances, and a note on burial in churches (*Meditations*, p. 42), which seems to have partly inspired the chapter on « Tombeaux Chrétiens » (*G. du C.* IV. II. 6)), there does not appear to be any further direct borrowings from Hervey.

Far different is it with the minister of Welwyn. Much of his influence is discernible in the chapter on the « Désir du Bonheur dans l'Homme » (I. VI. 1) and most of what Chateaubriand says in those beautiful lines on man's love of the infinite is to be found in the seventh « Night », which treats of immortality. « Il est certain » says the author of the « Génie », « que notre âme demande éternellement ; à peine a-t-elle obtenu l'objet de sa convoitise qu'elle demande encore, l'univers entier ne la satisfait point. L'infini est le seul champ qui lui convienne ; elle aime à se perdre dans les nombres, à concevoir les plus grandes comme les plus petites dimensions. Enfin gonflée et non rassasiée de ce qu'elle a dévoré, elle se précipite dans le sein de Dieu où viennent se réunir les idées de l'infini, en per-

fection, en temps et en espace » (I. VI. 1). Turning from Chateaubriand's rolling periods to the uninspired verses of his model, we quickly perceive the superiority of the « Enchanteur », whose haunting prose seems all the more beautiful when placed beside Young's halting lines :

> « Hope, eager hope, the assassin of our joy,
> All present blessings treading under foot,
> Is scarce a milder tyrant than despair.
> With no past toils content, still planting new,
> Hope turns us o'er to death alone for ease.
> .....
> Man's heart the Almighty to the future sets,
> By secret and inviolable springs ;
> And makes his hope, his sublunary joy.
> Man's heart eats all things and is hungry still ;
> More ! more ! the glutton cries ; for something new
> So rages appetite, if man can't mount,
> He will descend. He starves on the possest. »

And again :

> « To love, and know, in man
> Is boundless appetite, and boundless power ;
> And these demonstrate boundless objects too. »

And finally :

> Who wishes life immortal, proves it too
> Why happiness pursued, though never found ?
> Man's thirst of happiness declares it is,
> (For nature never gravitates to nought) ;
> The thirst unquench'd declares it is not here. »

When Chateaubriand speaks of the attraction of the Divine Being for the soul because of its inscrutability, « mais elle ne se plonge dans la divinité que parce que cette divinité est pleine de ténèbres, « Deus absconditus ». Si elle en obtenait une vue distincte, elle la dédaignerait comme tous les objets qu'elle mesure. On pourrait même dire que ce serait avec quelque raison ; car si l'âme s'expliquait bien le principe éternel, elle serait ou supérieure à ce principe ou bien son égale. Il n'en est pas de l'ordre des choses divines comme de l'ordre des choses humaines ; un homme peut comprendre la puissance d'un roi sans être un roi, mais un homme qui comprendrait Dieu

serait Dieu » (I. VI. 1) ; we know he is thinking of the following lines in Young (Night IX, p .250) :

« The more of wonderful
Is heard in him, the more we should assent.
Could we conceive him, God he could not be,
Or he not God, or we could not be men.
A God alone can comprehend a God ;
Man's distance how immense ! On such a theme
Know this, Lorenzo ! (Seem it ne'er so strange)
Nothing can satisfy, but what confounds ;
Nothing, but what astonishes, is true. »

On the subject of the superiority of man to the brute creation, there is further agreement between the two authors. For both, it is the soul that raises man above animals. This is what we find in Young (Night VII, pp. 146-147) :

« Or own the soul immortal, or invert
All order. Go mock-majesty ! Go, man !
And bow to thy superiors of the stall ;
Through every scene of sense superior far
They graze the turf untill'd ; they drink the stream
Unbrew'd, and ever full, and unembitter'd
With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs.
.....
They find a paradise in every field,
On bough forbidden where no curses hang :
Their ill no more than strikes the sense ; unstretcht
By previous dread, or murmur in the rear :
When the worst comes, it comes unfear'd ; »

Similarly Chateaubriand says :

« Or, les animaux ne sont point troublés par cette espérance que manifeste le cœur de l'homme, ils atteignent sur le champ à leur suprême bonheur ; un peu d'herbe satisfait l'agneau, un peu de sang rassasie le tigre ». And of the ox he says : « Il peut se coucher sur la verdure, lever la tête vers les cieux et appeler par ses mugissements l'Être inconnu qui remplit cette immensité. Mais non ! Préférant le gazon qu'il foule, il n'interroge point... ces soleils qui sont la grande évidence de l'existence de Dieu. Il est insensible au spectacle de la nature sans se douter qu'il est jeté lui-même sous l'arbre où il repose comme une petite preuve de l'Intelligence divine » (I. VI. 1). A further com-

parison of man with the brute occurs in the « Night Thoughts » and follows the same development as in the « Génie ».

« Is it that things terrestrial can't content ?
Deep in rich pasture, will thy flocks complain ?
Not so ; but to their master is denied
To share their sweet serene. Man, ill at ease
In this, not his own place, this foreign field,
Where nature fodders him with other food,
Than was ordain'd his craving to suffice.
Poor in abundance, famished at a feast,
Sighs on for something more, when most enjoy'd. »

It was probably this topic of the « bien inconnu » or man's search of the infinite that endeared Young, in spite of his faults, to our poet and it is interesting to find reiterated in the « Night Thoughts » a theme that was to re-enter French literature with the « Génie », under a newer and more entrancing guise than ever before, and reach its summit of power and expression in René. Though the idea is as old as literature itself, it had lain dormant and undeveloped during the classical period and in the 18th Century, and was not to be rehandled till the advent of the Pre-romantics. As Young was the first to strike the lyrical note in England, however faintly, it is not surprising that it should be heard and taken up by one who was destined to prolong it for nearly a century throughout French literature.

CHAPTER VI

Explorers and travellers and the « Génie du Christianisme ».

A great deal of Chateaubriand's material is to be found in the accounts of explorers and travellers in foreign lands. They formed a considerable part of his intellectual diet from the time when he was planning his « argos » in 1791 till the publication of the « Voyage en Amérique » in 1827. It was the ill-fated minister of Louis XVI that first inflamed him with the Wanderlust and the passion for adventure, by filling his mind with the exploits of previous travellers. « M. de Malesherbes » he says in his Mémoires, « me montait la tête sur ce voyage. J'allais le voir le matin ;... nous lisions les divers récits des navigateurs et voyageurs anglais, hollandais, français, russes, suédois, danois ; nous nous enquérions des chemins à suivre par terre, pour attaquer le rivage de la mer polaire, nous devisions des difficultés à surmonter, des précautions à prendre contre la rigueur du climat, les assauts des bêtes et le manque de vivres » (*M. O. T. I.* p. 307). That this type of reading still held his interest in exile, we know from references in the « Essai Historique » and the « Génie », and, that he continued after his return to France, to follow the results of the latest discoveries is clear from his remarks in the Préface to the « Voyage en Amérique » (*Œuvres Complètes*, tom. II, pp. 1-16). « Entre 1802 et 1826 » says M. Martino (R. H. L. tom. XVI. p. 451), « Chateaubriand paraît s'être tenu assez soigneusement au courant des publications de voyages sur l'Amérique septentrionale [1]. Du moins, au moment où il en vint à rédiger dans l'histoire de sa vie le récit du voyage en Amérique et où il rouvrit le « manuscrit des Natchez », il eut le scrupule d'amener sa narration jusqu'à l'époque actuelle ».

Much has been written about Chateaubriand's itinerary in America, round which a whole body of literature has grown up since M. Bédier first cast doubts upon the authenticity of the poet's accounts and exposed « la matière sèche et terne dont

1. M. Martino names a number of the contemporary explorers with whose accounts Chateaubriand was acquainted, subsequent to 1800 (R. H. L. XVI, p. 452).

les Chateaubriand font leurs chefs-d'œuvres [1] ». Indeed the controversy has but recently died down. We now know that Chateaubriand's excursions into the wilds of the New World were less extensive than he would have us imagine and that few, if any, of the scenes in which his American scenes are laid, were painted from personal observation. On the other hand, « les sources livresques » on which he relied, were so varied and so unusual as to offer a field of research which has rarely been surpassed in interest in the history of literature.

In the course of these investigations, chief attention was directed to the famous « manuscrit des Natchez » from which, as Chateaubriand avowed himself, most of his later works were drawn. It proved to be the source of many of those pages which Ste Beuve [2] styled « chapitres à tiroir », because they passed from one work to another, acquiring new force and assuming nober proportions as they moved along, and is therefore of interest to the student of the « Génie ». By an ingenious comparison of the allusions to the « manuscrit des Natchez » in Chateaubriand's own work, M. Martino [3] has arrived at an approximate idea of its contents and has shown us how it was composed. He does not believe with M. Bédier that Chateaubriand worked on a system of references, collating a number of « fiches », like a writer of to-day, but rather thinks he followed the method of « extraits » so popular in the literary reviews of the time. For these « extraits » the critic took large quotations from the work under review, making his own of them and blending them with his opinions and reflections in such a way

1. J. Bédier : *Chateaubriand en Amérique : Vérité et Fiction* 1903.
G. Bertrin : *Sainte-Beuve et Chateaubriand*, 1906.
E. Buron : Chateaubriand en Amérique (*Revue Canadienne*, janv.-fév. 1903),
G. Aubray : Chateaubriand a-t-il été en Amérique ? (*Mois Littéraire*, déc. 1905).
Madison Stathers : *Chateaubriand et l'Amérique*, (1905).
E. Dick : Quelques Sources Ignorées (*R. H. P.* 1906).
E. Dick : *Plagiats de Chateaubriand*, 1907.
Miss Armstrong : *Chateaubriand's America*, 1907.
P. Martino : A propos du voyage en Amérique (*R. H. L.*, 1909).
L. Hogu : Sources de Chateaubriand (*Mémoires de la Soc. d'Angers*, 1913).
G. Chinard. *Notes sur le Voyage en Amérique*, 1915.
G. Chinard : *Les Natchez*, 1919.
A. Lair. Sur le voyage de Chateaubriand (*La Quinzaine*, déc. p. 100).
V. Giraud : Chateaubriand à 22 ans (*Correspondant*, avril 1905).
V. Giraud : Sur le MS. des Natchez (*R. H. L.*, 1909)
J. Charlier : Le MS. des Natchez (*R. H. L.*, 1911).
2. *Chateaubriand et son Groupe Littéraire.*
3. A propos du Voyage en Amérique.

as to make it almost impossible to distinguish the borrowed from the original. Writing in this eighteenth-century fashion, it is not hard to understand why Chateaubriand himself was often unable « de faire le départ des sources » and especially in the case of one author in particular, from whom he borrowed so much. This was the traveller Bartram, with whose fine prose he seems to have become literally saturated. Recognition of this fact is due to M. Bédier [1], whose examples of Chateaubriand's debt to Bartram are classic. But more important than actual borrowings, is the literary influence of the poet-traveller on his style and to this, also, M. Bédier has attracted attention. « Ce Bartram est un poète ; si chétif soit-il en ses moyens d'expressions au regard de son prestigieux émule, il a donné de la nature tropicale et des solitudes vierges des Florides une image étrangement neuve, lumineuse et troublante. J'ose dire que mieux encore que son génial interprète il est habile à nous dépayser, il peint une nature qu'on sent plus singulièrement exotique et pourtant plus réelle. » (Etudes Critiques, pp. 261-262.)

To understand Bartram's power of suggestion, we have only to open the first chapter of his Travels and read the description of the sea, which has the same poetic vision as some of Chateaubriand's best scenes of nature. « There are few objects at sea », he says, « to attract the notice of the traveller but what are sublime, awful and majestic ; the seas themselves in a tempest, exhibit a tremendous scene, where the winds assert their power, and in furious conflict, seem to set the ocean on fire. On the other hand, nothing can be more sublime than the view of the encircling horizon after the turbulent winds have taken their flight and the lately agitated bosom of the deep has again become calm and pacific ; the gentle moon rising in dignity from the east, attended by millions of glittering orbs ; the luminous appearance of the seas at night, when all the waters seem transmuted into liquid silver... the water suddenly alive with its scaly inhabitants ; squadrons of sea-fowl sweeping through the air ; impregnated with the breath of fragrant aromatic trees and of flowers ; the amplitude and magnificence of these scenes are great indeed and may present to the imagination an idea of the first appearance of the earth to man at the creation ».

1. *Etudes critiques : Vérité et Fiction.*

Not only the spirit but also some of the colours of this beautiful canvas are imitated in the « Génie ». The « étincelles de feu » that run along the foam in the famous sea-scape in « Deux Perspectives de la Nature » (*G. du C.* I. V. 12) recall the winds that « seem to set the ocean on fire » while « Des millions d'étoiles rayonnant dans le sombre azur du dôme céleste, la lune au milieu du firmament » (I. V. 12) is probably a reminiscence of « the gentle moon... attended by millions of glittering orbs ». The opening lines of the well-known night in the pine-forest : « Une heure après le coucher du soleil la lune se montra au-dessus des arbres à l'horizon opposé. Une brise embaumée que cette reine des nuits amenait de l'orient avec elle semblait la précéder dans les forêts comme sa fraîche haleine » seems also based on a similar nature-scene in Bartram where, however, the incomparable image of « la reine des nuits » and « sa fraîche haleine » is missing. « Dewy evening now comes on, the animated breezes which cooled and tempered the meridian hours of the sultry season, now gently cease ; the glorious sovereign of the day, calling in his bright beaming emanations, leaves us in his absence to the milder government and protection of the silver queen of the night attended by millions of brilliant luminaries « (*Travels*, p. 190). In another paragraph in Bartram, M. Bédier [1] finds further affinity to the same night-piece [2] in Chateaubriand. « The steady breezes, gently and continually rising and falling, fill the high lonesome forests with an awful reverential harmony, inexpressibly sublime and not to be enjoyed anywhere but in these native wild Indian regions » (*Travels*, p. 180), which gives utterance to all the poetry of solitude, so beloveda theme of René but, as descriptions of this type are frequent with the America explorer, it is difficult to establish the exact point of contact.

Particularly sensitive to the sounds of nature, Bartram returns again and again to the « sourd mugissement des bois », for the west winds blow as frequently over his savannas as through the forests of Chateaubriand. He is never tired of noting the « gentle zephyrs breathing through the fragrant pines » and in a desert waste, he finds « scarce an animal to be seen or a

1. *Etudes Critiques*, p. 270.

2. This is one of the « chapitres à tiroir », that recurs in « Atala », « Essai Historique », « Génie », etc.

noise heard save the symphony of the western breeze through the bristly pine leaves « (*Op. cit.*, p. 218). With the preoccupation of an artist, Bartram is also interested in colours, contrasts, lights and shades and the reflection of beautiful things in water. None of the wonderful eflects of nature in this new and unexplored country escape his notice and the brilliant hues of the flowers, the trees and the birds of the American forests shine through all his pages. Here is one out of a hundred different descriptions of plants : « a very beautiful green shrub ; its cerulean flowers and coral red berries always on its branches forming not the least of its beauties », which reminds us of Chateaubriand's own palette on which bright colours were often mixed. For instance, in the bullfinch's nest in « Nids des Oiseaux » (I. V. 6) « il ressemblait à une conque de nacre, contenant quatre perles bleues ; une rose pendait au-dessus tout humide : le bouvreuil mâle se tenait immobile sur un arbuste voisin comme une fleur de pourpre et d'azur. Ces objets étaient répétés dans l'eau d'un étang avec l'ombrage d'un noyer, qui servait de fond à la scène et derrière lequel on voyait se lever l'aurore ». In these last lines, there is a typically Bratramesque touch for nothing recurs as frequently in the « Travels » as rivers, lakes and wells, that take on the shades of the tall trees on their borders, or in whose transparent waters, nature is mirrored. In the river Tanase, Bartram sees « the images reflected from the flowery banks above » and of the Little Saint Juan, says : « the waters are the clearest and purest of any river I ever saw, transmitting distinctly the natural form and appearance of the objects moving in the transparent floods » (p. 224). Near the Manate spring « the waters appear of a lucid seagreen colour, in some measure, owing to the reflection of the leaves above » (p. 231). The play of light on nature is another favourite theme in the « Travels ». All the rivers and streams sparkle and shimmer through the trees and the sun casts rosy beams at dawn or turns everything to gold at noon. « I came into a charming vale », he says in one place, « embellished with a delightful glittering river, which meandered through it and crossed my road » ; (p. 333) ; and in another, « My road led me up into an opening of the ascents through which the glittering brook which watered the meadows ran rapidly down, dashing and roaring over high rocky steps » (p. 388). More dazzling still is the pool in this

description : « The glittering water pond plays on the sight, through the dark grove, like a brilliant diamond, on the bosom of the illumined savanna, bordered with various flowery shrubs and plants » (p. 99). Of the « glorious sovereign of day « he writes : « Behold how gracious and beneficent smiles the roseate morn ! how the sun arises and fills the plains with light, his glories appear in the forests, encompassing the meadows and gild the tops of the terebenthine pine and exalted palms, now gently rustling by the pressure of the waking breezes » (p. 245).

Not only the flowers and trees interest Bartram, the fish, the birds and wild animals of North America have a large place in his journals too, and it is not surprising to find that book of the « Génie » which deals with the marvels of nature (Pt. I. Bk. V.) studded with reminiscences of the « Travels Through Carolina ». One of the most striking perhaps, is in the chapter on the Migration of Fish (*G. du C.* I. V. 4) : « Le printemps prépare sur nos bords la pompe nuptiale... à peine ces préparatifs sont-ils achevés qu'on voit paraître les légions émaillées. Ces navigateurs étrangers animent tous nos rivages ; les uns comme de légères bulles d'air, remontent perpendiculairement du fond des eaux ; les autres se balancent mollement sur les vagues ou divergent d'un centre commun, comme d'innombrables traits d'or ;ceux-ci dardent obliquement leurs formes glissantes à travers l'azur fluide ; ceux-là dorment dans un rayon de soleil qui pénètre la gaze argentée des flots. Tous s'égarent, reviennent, nagent, plongent, circulent, se forment en escadron, se séparent, se réunissent encore ». This beautiful mosaic rests no doubt on Bartram's pictures of the fish in « les puits naturels » of Florida, one of which M. Bédier [1] quotes for the sources of the « Voyage ». « At the same instant innumerable bands of fish are seen, some clothed in the most brilliant colours... all in their separate bands and communities with free and unsuspicious intercourse, performing their evolutions... Now, they come forward rapidly and instantly emerge... into the circular basin or funnel ; see now how they gently rise, some upright, others obliquely or seem to lie as it were on their sides, suffering themselves to be gently lifted or borne up by the expanding fluid towards the surface, sailing and floating like butterflies in the cerulean ether ; then again, they as gently descend, diverge and

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 211.

move off ; when they rally, form again and rejoin their kindred tribes » (pp. 166-167). The butterflies that we associate with the golden rays of the sun are replaced in Chateaubriand by « traits d'or » and the cerulean ether becomes « l'azur fluide ». In the Little Saint Juan river, Bartram sees fish in great numbers again and repeats his impressions : « It is amazing and almost incredible what troops and bands of fish and other watery inhabitants are now in sight, all peaceable and in what variety of gay colours and forms, continually ascending and descending, roving and figuring amongst one another, yet every tribe associating separately ».

Even more attracted by the feathered race than the finny tribe, Bartram neglected no opportunity of studying their appearance and noting their habits. With an ear as keen for music, as his eye for colour, he speaks incessantly of their melodious song and here again Chateaubriand comes under his spell and devotes some of the finest pages and no less than four chapters of the « Génie » to the subject of birds. Adapting his model to his own purpose, Chateauriand turns the exotic inhabitants of the American forests into the more familiar residents of our fields. While Bartram hears « the melody of the cheerful mock-bird, warbling nonpareil and plaintive turtle-dove », for our poet, « le loriot siffle, l'hirondelle gazouille, le ramier gémit ».

Bartram speaks more than once of the wood-pelican which « stands alone on the topmost limb of tall dead cypress trees » and M. Bédier [1] sees a relation between this and Chateaubriand's « pelican des bois visitant les morts de la solitude, ne s'arrêtant qu'aux cimetières indiens et aux monts des tombeaux », but there is a still closer parallel with another very beautiful paragraph in the « Génie », describing the birds of passage that come in the winter. « Les oiseaux qui paraissent dans les mois des tempêtes ont des voix tristes et des mœurs sauvages comme la saison qui les amène... Les arbres qui balancent tristement leurs cimes dépouillées, ne portent que de noires légions, qui se sont associées pour passer l'hiver ; elles ont leurs sentinelles et leurs gardes avancées ; souvent une corneille centenaire, antique sibylle du désert, se tient seule perchée sur un chêne avec lequel elle a vieilli ; là tandis que ses sœurs font silence, immobile et comme pleine de pensées, elle abandonne aux vents des mo-

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 285.

nosyllabes prophétiques. » (G. du C. I. V. 7.) In lines that have a fine flight of fancy and must have given the first impetus to our poet, the American traveller writes : « Behold, on yon decayed, defoliated, cypress tree, the solitary wood-pelican, dejectedly perched upon its utmost elevated spire ; he there, like an ancient venerable sage, sets himself up as a mark of derision, for the safety of his kindred tribes. The crying-bird, another faithful guardian screaming in the gloomy thickets, warns the feathered tribes of approaching peril ; and the plumage of the swift sailing squadrons of spanish curlews..... gleam in the cerulean skies » (p. 49). In Chateaubriand, the pelican and the crying-bird are combined into the cawing-rook that acts as a sentinel on the tree-tops and out of the commonplace expression, « an ancient venerable sage » has arisen a beautiful image, « antique sibylle du désert ».

But if Chateaubriand sometimes transforms words and phrases in Bartram, giving them added splendour and vision, he often adopts his vocabulary without change. One of the most usual terms in the « Travels » for the waters of Florida is the word « pellucid » which the French translator renders « diaphane » [1] and this comparatively rare epithet has been taken up by Chateaubriand and used with considerable effect in the oft-quoted cloud-picture in « Deux Perspectives de la Nature » ; « Ces nues, ployant et déployant leurs voiles, se déroulaient en zones diaphanes de satin blanc ». « Bleuâtre » and « azuré » are two other words in the same description which are redolent of the « Travels », where every sky or sheet of water has cerulean or azure depths. The popularity of the « zephyr » with both writers has already been mentioned, and the « defoliated » cypress tree, quoted in the lines on the wood-pelican seems to be the origin of Chateaubriand's « Chêne exfolié » (I. V. 6.), though it is also to be found in « Etudes de la Nature », with which our poet was very familiar.

Recollections of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, as well of Bartram, are probably also responsible for much of this next paragraph, treating of the utility of birds (*G. du C.* I. V. 8) ; « Dans

1. This word occurs continuously in the French version of the « Travels ».
« J'entrai dans les eaux diaphanes sans peine (I, p. 279).
« S'abaissant lentement dans les eaux diaphanes (I, p. 304).
« Jusqu'aux moindres poissons qui jouent dans ce milieu diaphane » (I, p. 383).
« Elle (l'eau) était partout diaphane » (I, p. 392).

les premiers âges du monde, c'est sur la floraison des plantes, sur la chute des feuilles, sur le départ et l'arrivée des oiseaux, que les laboureurs et les bergers réglaient leurs travaux..... Les anciens naturalistes et les poètes... nous montrent combien était merveilleuse cette manière de compter par les fastes de la nature et quel charme elle répandait sur la vie. Dieu est un profond secret ; l'homme créé à son image est pareillement incompréhensible ; c'était donc une ineffable harmonie de voir les périodes de ses jours réglées par des horloges aussi mystérieuses que lui-même ». Remarks of the same nature are to be found in Bartram, but in this case, it seems to have been the French version that served as model. « L'agriculture et ses travaux », he says, « étaient en grande partie réglés par l'arrivée et le départ des oiseaux de passage et peut-être un calendrier fondé sur cette méthode, pourrait-il être de quelque utilité, tant pour le laboureur que pour le jardinier » (*Voyage* II, pp. 32 ff.).Here, the translator[1],à tiroir », because they passed ing reflection in a note : « Toutes les sciences sont fondées sur l'observation de la nature et toutes ont ordinairement pour objet de fournir aux hommes des méthodes qui les dispensent d'observer d'eux-mêmes. La plupart des habitants des villes ne jugent des saisons que par le calendrier, de l'heure que par les horloges. Les gens de la campagne ignorent souvent nos formules et s'en passent, parce qu'ils ont sous les yeux, la nature » (p. 33). And it is to this observation from M. Benoist, that we probably owe a part at least [2] of the following paragraph from the « Génie » : « nos paysans se servent encore quelquefois de ces tables charmantes où sont gravés les temps des travaux rustiques. Les peuples de l'Inde en font le même usage et les nègres et les sauvages américains gardent cette manière de compter. Un Siminole de la Floride vous dit : « Sa fille s'est mariée à l'arrivée du colibri » ; l'enfant est mort quand la nonpareille a mué» ; « cette mère a autant de fils qu'il y a d'œufs dans le nid du pélican » (*G. du C.*, I. V. 8). These are

1. P. V. Benoist.

2. This is how the same subject is treated in « Paul et Virginie » : « Paul et Virginie n'avaient ni horloges ni almanachs, ni livres de chronologie, d'histoire et de philosophie. Les périodes de leur vie se réglaient sur celles de la nature. Ils connaissaient les heures du jour par l'ombre des arbres, les saisons, par les temps où ils donnent leurs fruits, et les années par le nombre de leurs récoltes... « Il est temps de dîner », disait Virginie à la famille, « la nuit s'approche ; les tamarins ferment leurs feuilles », etc., pp. 55 ff.

the birds whose bright plumage and gay song enliven the accounts of the American traveller, from whom they have passed with « la grue des Florides », « l'ibis égyptien », « le butor doré », « le héron bleu » and a dozen other commoner specimens into the pages of the « Génie ».

Not only for the chapters on fish and birds but for those on animals and reptiles, is Chateaubriand indebted to Bartram. The borrowings on crocodiles, serpents and nature-study in general, have been the subject of so much comment that little remains to be said. His debt is so great that we must conclude that the « Travels through Carolina » played a very important part in the development of his genius. Nor is it surprising that a writer of such imagination and such strong moral persuasion [1] should have had so powerful an effect on the author of the « Génie », and stirred him to such fine writing.

Compared with Bartram, the influence of other explorers with whose works he was acquainted, was slight. From Jonathan Carver, whose « Travels through North America », Chateaubriand used more freely when writing « Le Voyage en Amérique », there are only a few details on the habits of wild animals. Some of the ideas on beavers to which our poet devotes a few lines in « Instinct des Animaux » (I. V. 4) probably comes from this source, though Charlevoix no doubt, counts for something here too [2]. In the well-known story of « Le Serpent et la Flute » (I. III. 2), if the main source is Bartram [3], a little is also due to Carver who speaks of the effect of music on the rattlesnake, thus : « It has often been observed and I can confirm the observation, that the rattlesnake is charmed with any harmonious sounds whether vocal or instrumental. I have many times seen them even when they have been enraged, place themselves in a listening posture, and continue immovably attentive and susceptible of delight all the time the music lasted » (p. 319). It is from Carver, too, that Chateaubriand takes his admiration for the generosity and maternal affection of the snake. « Le reptile », he says, « qui donne aux hommes des leçons de générosité, leur en donne encore de tendresse.

1. Pious reflections and appeals to the deity abound in the « *Travels through Carolina* ». Vide pp. 57, 73, 100, etc.

2. See Bédier : *Etudes critiques*, pp. 220 ff. and E. Dick : *Plagiats de Chateaubriand*, pp. 6 ff.

3. See Bédier : *Op. cit.*, p. 283.

Quand la famille est poursuivie, il la reçoit dans sa gueule [1] ; peu content des lieux où il la pourrait cacher, il la fait rentrer en lui, ne trouvant point pour des enfants d'asile plus sûr que le sein d'une mère. Exemple d'un dévouement sublime, il ne survit point à la perte de ses petites, car, pour les lui ravir, il faut les arracher de ses entrailles » (I. V. 10). Once again in the « Génie », we hear of the great love of the serpent for its offspring : « Par une étrange faculté, il [le serpent] peut rentrer dans son sein les petits monstres que l'amour en a fait sortir » (I. III. 2). And in Carver, we find the following : « It is... to be observed that it (the snake) never acts offensively ; it neither pursues nor flies from anything that approaches it, but lies in the position described, rattling its tail as if reluctant to hurt » (*Travels*, p. 481). Of the snakes and their young, he says : « I once killed a female that had seventy young ones in its belly ; but these were perfectly formed, and I saw them just before retire to the mouth of their mother as a place of security on my approach » (p. 485).

In addition to the American explorers, Chateaubriand was also interested in discoverers of other parts of the globe and shows an acquaintance with the journals of Captain Cook, James Bruce [2] and William Coxe [3]. It is not much more than an acquaintance, however except perhaps in the case of the hero of the South Pole, to whom there are two references in the « Génie ». In the chapter on Migratory birds (I. V. 7) Chateaubriand says some of these feathered guests visit us, never to return to their native land, « les uns, comme les compagnons d'Ulysse, sont captivés par la douceur de quelques fruits, les autres comme les déserteurs du vaisseau de Cook sont séduits par des enchanteresses qui les retiennent dans leurs îles [4] ». As an example of tenderness in animals, he says : « l'ours pousse

1. Chateaubriand refers to Carver in a foot-note to this text.

2. Sir. Jas. Bruce, auhor of « Travels to discover the Source of the Nile », mentioned in the « Génie » I. IV. 2.

3. Wm. Coxe, author of « Letters on Switzerland ». (See notes 45 and. 57. *G. du C.*).

4. This is no doubt a reference to the mutineers of the « Bounty » which sailed from England in December 1787 under Lieutenant William Bligh, one of Cook's former associates in his voyages round the world. Captain Bligh's object was to introduce the bread fruit tree from Tahiti to the West Indies. When he had just left the island with his cargo of plants, his whole crew mutinied with the exception of eighteen men, who with the captain, were cast adrift in a launch and only reached shore after much suffering and hardship. They arrived in England in 1790, while the ships with the deserters returned to Tahiti.

l'amour maternel jusqu'à allaiter ses enfants après leur mort [1]. and refers in a foot-note to Cook's Voyages as the source of his information. But there is more of this influence apparent in the chapter on the « Otaïtiens » (IV. II. 5) where Chateaubriand paints an idyllic picture of the pacific Eden. In a book called « New Discoveries » [2], giving a summary of the Voyages of Byron, Wallis, Carteret, Cook and Bougainville, Tahiti is described as follows : « The country has a delightful, romantic appearance, it is level towards the sea... at the distance of about three miles from the shore, the country rises into lofty hills, that are covered with wood and terminates in peaks... The island is skirted with a reef of rocks. The aspect of this coast, elevated like an amphitheatre, presents to the view, the most captivating prospect », which seems to have been the inspiration of the picture in the « Génie ». « Bientôt du sein de l'immensité, s'élevèrent des îles inconnues. Des bosquets de palmiers mêlés à de grands arbres, qu'on en eût pris pour de hautes fougères, couvraient les côtes et descendaient jusqu'au bord de la mer en amphithéâtre... ces îles environnées d'un cercle de coraux semblaient se balancer comme des vaisseaux à l'ancre dans un port ». Of the clothes of the « Otaïtiens » we learn in « New Discoveries » (Section IV), « the principal manufacture among these people is their cloth, which is made of the bark of trees and is of three kinds, the Chinese mulberry tree... the bread-fruit tree »... and one that is said « to resemble the wild fig-tree of the West Indies ». In the « Génie » we are told : « les Otaïtiens portaient pour vêtement une draperie d'écorce de figuier ; ils habitaient sous les toits de feuilles de mûrier ». In spite of the care-free habits and happy life of the natives, « le premier pavillon », says Chateaubriand, « qu'on découvre sur ces rives enchantées est celui de la mort, qui flotte au-dessus de toutes les félicités humaines » — « c'étaient les poteaux des Moraï », of which we read in the account of Capt. Cook's « Third Voyage ». « The Moraï (which undoubtedly is a place of worship, sacrifice and burial at the same time)... is that, where the supreme chief of the whole island is always buried, and is appropriated to his family and some of the principal people »[3]. On his first visit to Tahiti, Capt. Cook

1. This reference has not been discovered.
2. Published in 1778.
3. « A collection of Voyages and Travels », vol. IX, pp. 29 ff.

observed the burial of « a woman of some rank » in one of these Moraï. « In the middle of a small square, neatly railed in with bamboo, the awning of a canoe was raised upon two posts and under this, the body was deposited ». When the deceased was being carried to the burial place, the chief mourner « uttered something, which was supposed to be a prayer, near the body ; and did the same when he came up to his own house... It is the custom of the Indians to fly from these processions with the utmost precipitation, so that as soon as those who were about the fort, saw it at a distance, they hid themselves in the woods » [1]. Such are the points that impressed Chateaubriand, to judge from the following : « Les Otaïtiens comme les autres peuples ont des rites religieux et des cérémonies funèbres ; ils ont surtout attaché une grande pensée de mystère à la mort. Lorsqu'on porte un esclave au Moraï, tout le monde fuit sur son passage ; le maître de la pompe murmure alors quelques mots à l'oreille du décédé. Arrivé au lieu du repos, on ne descend point le corps dans la terre, mais on le suspend dans un berceau qu'on recouvre d'un canot renversé, symbole du naufrage de la vie » (IV. II. 5).

That Chateaubriand was no superficial student of the literature of the Explorers, we can see from his treatment of Cook's Voyages. Not satisfied with the resumé in « New Discoveries » he goes straight to the fountain-head for first-hand information. Most probably he knew the accounts of all three expeditions of Capt. Cook, for we find something in the « Génie » of not only the First Voyage but also of the Third Voyage from which liberal extracts were made for the « Essai sur les Révolutions ». There is not much beauty of style in these bald and often tedious narrations, but there is the charm of freshness and originality, inseparable from all descriptions of new and unconquered territory. To one whose appetite had been whetted by glimpses of the virgin soil of America, and by the romance of daily life in another foreign country, the appeal must have been unusually strong. Added to that, the imagination of a poet, « toujours en éveil » for the most trivial impressions, suggestive of beauty, to weave them into his dreams and « transmute them into golden words » and we can easily understand the stimulus of these tales of travel.

1. « Hawkesworth's Voyages », vol. II, pp. 142 ff.

CHAPTER VII

Historians and the « Génie du Christianisme ».

Of his passion for history, that equalled if it did not surpass his interest in foreign travel, Chateaubriand gives evidence from the outset of his literary career. The « Essai sur les Révolutions » is the first fruit of his historical studies and while testifying to enormous erudition, is little more than « the undigested mass » of the annals of the ancient world. In the « Génie du Christianisme », the historical element is ágain present, but has not the same pride of place as in the former work. It shows, however, the author's preoccupation with the historians of the modern world, as well as his acquaintance with the great British « triumvirate » Hume, Robertson and Gibbon. Though all three are mentioned [1], it is only to the historian of Rome that he appears to be indebted to any considerable extent, and just as the section of the « Génie » devoted to nature-study, teemed with reminiscences of Bartram, the historical part is studded with recollections of Gibbon.

The borrowings from « The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire » have already been examined in « Plagiats de Chateaubriand » by Mr. Ernst Dick, who dismisses them in a rather summary fashion. « Les emprunts de Gibbon », he says, « qu'on peut trouver dans le « Génie du Christianisme » sont relativement insignifiants (et d'ailleurs parfaitement légitimes), si bien qu'il ne vaudrait guère la peine de les relever si ce n'était pour démontrer que Chateaubriand connut assez tôt le « Decline and Fall ». (*Plagiats*, p. 57). Though, it is true, there is little ground for an accusation of plagiarism, such as Mr. Dick makes for « Les Martyrs » and « Discours Historiques sur la Chute de l'Empire Romain », there is plenty of evidence that Chateaubriand knew his Gibbon well and was alive to the importance of a work, destined to be a landmark in the history of letters.

1. To Hume there is only a passing reference, but from, Robertson a quotation is taken (from « Histoire de l'Amérique ») in support of the charity and tolerance of the clergy towards the natives of the first Spanish Colonies of America (see *G. du C.* IV. VI. 2), as well as the material for note 57.

From this point of view, we feel justified in reopening the question and making a closer study of the English historian's influence in the « Génie ».

There are traces of Gibbon throughout the book, but it is, perhaps, in the chapters on « Monastic Life » that we find the most striking points of ressemblance. Here, the lead seems to have been taken from the well-know Chapter XXXVII, describing the « Origin, Progress and Effects of the Monastic Life » (vol. IV, pp. 57-97). Like Gibbon, our poet traces the beginnings of religious life to a very remote past. « Elle remonte aux premiers âges du monde. Le prophète Élie fuyant la corruption d'Israël se retira le long du Jourdain, où il vécut d'herbes et de racines, avec quelques disciples » (*G. du C.* IV. III. 3). The origin is not far to seek. « They trod in the footsteps of the prophets who had retired to the desert » says Gibbon, « and they restored the devout, contemplative life, which had been instituted by the Essenians in Palestine and Egypt » ; and the parallel is completed by a foot-note, « The Carmelites derive their pedigree in regular succession from the prophet Elijah » (*Decline and Fall*, vol. IV, p. 58). Of these Essenians or Therapeutæ, Chateaubriand says : « Bientôt les Therapeutæ, embrassant les perfections de la retraite, offrirent près du lac Mœris en Égypte, les premiers modèles des monastères Chrétiens » and in Chapter XV, Gibbon tells us that the Christian religion « was at first embraced by great numbers of the Therapeutæ or Essenians of the Lake Moreotis, a Jewish sect which had abated much of its reverence for the Mosaic ceremony » (vol. II, pp. 59 ff). « Enfin sous Paul, Antoine et Pacôme » continues Chateaubriand, « paraissent ces saints de la Thebaïde, qui remplissent le Carmel et le Liban, des chefs-d'œuvre de la pénitence » and in the historian of Rome, we read, « the prolific colonies of monks multiplied with rapid increase on the sands of Libya, upon the rocks of Thebais and in the cities of the Nile » (*op. cit.* IV, p. 59). With a subject so susceptible of poetic treatment, it is not surprising to find Chateaubriand's account, adorned with flowers of language and ornaments of rhetoric that are missing from the model and to read of the haunts of the hermits, « une voix de gloire et de merveille s'éleva du fond des plus affreuses solitudes. Des musiques divines se mêlaient au bruit des cascades et des sources, les séraphins visitaient l'an-

chorète du rocher ou enlevaient son âme brillante sur les nues ; les lions servaient de messagers solitaires et les corbeaux lui apportaient la manne céleste » [1] (*G. du C.* IV, III. 3).

But when we come to the description of community life, there is much less disparity between the two writers. « Dans la règle de Saint Bénoît, tout est prescrit jusqu'aux plus petits détails de la vie ; lit, nourriture, promenade, conversation, prière » (*G. du C.* IV. III. 4). « The actions of a monk, his words and even his thoughts were determined by an inflexible rule », says Gibbon and adds in a note : « The ancient codex Regularum collected by Benedict Anianinus, the reformer of the monks in the beginning of the ninth century... contains thirty different rules for men and women » (*op. cit.*, IV, p. 65). To both commentators, the life of the monks seemed a hard one. « Le moins cophte, en entrant dans son monastère, renonce aux plaisirs, consume son temps en travail, en jeûnes, en prières et à la pratique de l'hospitalité. *Il couche sur la dure*, dort à peine quelques instants, se relève, et, *sous le beau firmament d'Égypte*, fait entendre sa voix parmi les débris de Thèbes et de Memphis » [2] (*G. du C.* IV. III. 5). « *The austere monks slept on the ground, on a hard mat or a rough blanket*, and the same bundle of palm-leaves served them as a seat in the day and a pillow in the night » (*op. cit.* IV, p. 67). For the picture in the « Génie » of the monk praying beneath the nocturnal skies of Egypt, the inspiration was probably the following : « According to their faith and zeal, they [the monks] might employ the day, which they passed in their cells, either in vocal or mental prayer ; they assembled in the evening and they were awakened in the night, for the public worship of the monastery. The precise moment was determined by the stars, which are seldom clouded in *the serene sky of Egypt* and a rustic horn or trumpet, the signal of devotion twice interrupted the vast silence of the desert » (*op. cit.* IV, p. 71).

1. Even in Gibbon, the « golden legend » of the saints is not entirely absent. Of the favourites of heaven, he says, « they familiarly accosted or imperiously commanded the lions and serpents of the desert; infused vegetation into a sapless trunk; suspended iron on the surface of the water; passed the Nile on the back of a crocodile and refreshed themselves in a fiery furnace ». (IV. P. 75.)

2. Here is the rest of the description. « Tantôt l'écho des Pyramides redit aux ombres de Pharaon les cantiques de cet enfant de la famille de Joseph : Tantôt ce pieux solitaire chante au matin les louanges du vrai soleil, au même lieu où des statues harmonieuses soupiraient le réveil de l'aurore ».

Of the habitations of the « solitaires de la Thebaïde », Chateaubriand writes: « Ils habitaient des cellules appelées laures and this unusual word is explained by Gibbon : « The fervent monastries of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria were surrounded by a Laura, a distant circle of solitary cells » (IV, p. 72). That the monks were a hard-working body of men, did not require the testimony of the author of the « Génie », « Rien n'est plus contraire à la vérité historique que de se présenter les premiers moines comme des oisifs, qui vivaient dans l'abondance aux dépens des superstitions humaines. D'abord cette abondance n'était rien moins que réelle. L'ordre par ses travaux pouvait être devenu riche, mais il est certain que le religieux vivait durement » (IV. VI. 9), it had already been admitted by Gibbon. « The brethren were supported by their manual labour ; and the duty of labour was strenuously recommended as a penance, as an exercise and as the most laudable means of securing their daily sustenance. *The gardens and fields which the industry of the monks had often rescued from the forest or the morass were diligently cultivated by their hands.* They perfomed without reluctance, the menial offices of slaves and domestics, and the several trades that were necessary to provide their habits ; their utensils and their lodging were exercised within the precincts of the great monasteries » (*op. cit.* IV, p. 68). It was undoubtedly of these lines our poet was thinking when he wrote : « La plupart des concessions faites aux monastères dans les premiers siècles de l'Église étaient *des terres vagues que les moines cultivaient de leurs propres mains. Des forêts sauvages, des marais impracticables, de vastes landes furent la source de ces richesses* que nous avons tant reprochées au clergé (IV. VI. 7) ; and « La plupart des premiers religieux étaient maçons aussi bien que laboureurs. Les bénédictins bâtissaient leurs maisons de leurs propres mains, comme on le voit par l'histoire des couvents du Mont Cassin, de ceux de Fontrevault et de plusieurs autres » (IV. VI 9).

Though according to the « guiding idea » of the « Decline and Fall », Christianity was responsible for the arrest of progress and the decay of civilisation after the break-up of the Empire, Gibbon did not deprive the monks of all credit for carrying on the torch of learning. « The monastic studies », he says, « have tended, for the most part, to darken rather than to

dispel the cloud of superstition. Yet the curiosity or zeal of some learned solitaries has cultivated the ecclesiastic and even the profane sciences, and posterity must gratefully acknowledge that the monuments of Greek and Roman literature have been preserved and multiplied by their indefatigable pens » (IV, p. 69) ; and again : « the immortal productions of Virgil, Cicéro and Livy which were accessible to the Christian barbarians, maintained a silent intercourse between the reign of Augustus and the times of Clovis and Charlemagne. The emulation of mankind was encouraged by the remembrance of a more perfect state and the *flame of science* was secretly kept alive to warm and enlighten the mature age of the western world ». It is hardly necessary to say, that when Chateaubriand finds his master praising the Early Church, he is a willing disciple, only too eager to imitate, and if possible, improve, as witness the following : « Il est donc très probable que sans le Chrisianisme, le naufrage de la société et des lumières eût été total. On ne peut calculer combien de siècles eussent été nécessaires au genre humain pour sortir de l'ignorance et de la barbarie corrompue dans lesquelles il se fût trouvé enseveli. Il ne fallait rien moins qu'un corps immense de solitaires répandus dans les trois parties du globe, et travaillant de concert à la même fin pour conserver ces étincelles qui ont rallumé chez les modernes le *flambeau des sciences* » (IV. VI 13).

But when the author of « The Decline and Fall » represents the Catholic Church as opposed to art and literature, Chateaubriand is quick to refute his opinions and assert the contrary. The refining influence of Christianity, the main thesis of the « Génie », is never more staunchly upheld than in response to a counter-claim by the English deist. « The unfeeling candidate for heaven » says Gibbon, « was instructed not only to resist the grosser allurements of the taste or smell, but even to shut his ears against the profane harmony of sounds and to view with indifference « the most finished productions of human art » (*op. cit.* II, p. 35) ; and again : « In the style of the fathers, Apollo and the Muses were the organs of the infernal spirit, Homer and Virgil were the most eminent of his servants, and the beautiful mythology, which pervades and animates the composition of their genius, is destined to celebrate the glory of the demons » (II, p. 17). To which the author of the « Génie » replies : « Ceux

qui représentent le Christianisme comme arrêtant le progrès des lumières contredisent manifestement les témoignages historiques. Partout la civilisation a marché sur les pas de l'Évangile... et forcé l'homme à vieillir dans son enfance » (IV. VI 6) ; and again : « Durant les longues calamités qui accompagnèrent et qui suivirent la chute de l'Empire romain, les sciences n'eurent d'autre retraite que le sanctuaire de cette Église qu'elles profanent aujourd'hui avec tant d'ingratitude » (I. IV. 3). Far from retarding the march of civilisation, the Church counts among her servants some of the world's greatest artists and musicians. « Les religieux eux-mêmes cultivaient les beaux-arts et étaient les peintres, les sculpteurs et les architectes de l'âge gothique. Si leurs ouvrages nous paraissent grossiers aujourd'hui, n'oublions pas qu'ils forment l'anneau où les siècles antiques viennent se rattacher aux siècles modernes ; que, sans eux, la chaîne de la tradition des lettres et des arts eût été totalement interrompue » (*G. du C.* IV. VI. 9). To Christianity we owe the very survival of music : « Il a sauvé la musique dans les siècles barbares, là où il a placé son trône,là s'est formé un peuple qui chante naturellement comme les oiseaux » (III. I. 1). And the number of great artists who acknowledge the supremacy of the Church of Rome, is legion : « Ainsi lorsqu'on entend soutenir que le christianisme est l'ennemi des arts, on demeure muet d'étonnement, car, à l'instant même, on ne peut s'empêcher de se rappeler Michel-Ange, Raphaël, Carrache, Dominique, Le Sueur, Poussin, Coustou et tant d'autres artistes, dont les seuls noms rempliraient des volumes » (III. I. 3).

To « The Decline and Fall », Chateaubriand is not only indebted for much of his information about the monks, but also for the history of the organisation of the Early Church and of the society of pagan Rome. Of the division between the priests and people he says: « Le nom de laïque fut inventé pour distinguer l'homme qui n'était pas engagé dans les ordres du corps général du clergé. Le titre de clerc se forma en même temps ; « laïci » et « khlerikhos » se lisent à chaque page des anciens auteurs » (IV. III. 2), which is evidently based on a passage in Gibbon ; « The progress of ecclesiastical authority gave birth to the memorable distinction of the laity and of the clergy, which had been unknown to the Greeks and Romans. The former of these appellations comprehended the body of

the Christian people ; the latter, according to the signification of the word was appropriated to the chosen portion, that had been set apart for the service of religion » (*op. cit.* II, p. 46). We read, too, of the Agapæ in the « Génie » : « Enfin les bénéfices séculiers durent leur origine aux agapes ou repas des premiers chrétiens. Chaque fidèle apportait quelques aumônes pour l'entretien de l'évêque, du prêtre et du diacre et pour le soulagement des malades et des étrangers » [1] (IV. III. 2) ; and in Gibbon, « and in their weekly or monthly assemblies, every believer, according to the exigency of the occasion and the measure of his wealth and piety, presented his voluntary offering for the use of the common fund... a decent portion was reserved for the maintenance of the bishop and his clergy : a sufficient sum was allotted for the expenses of the public worship, of which the feasts of love, the agapæ, as they were called, constituted a very pleasing part » (*op. cit.* II, pp. 47-50). Summing up the barbarism of slavery under the Roman Emperors, Chateaubriand says : « Il y avait une loi qui défendait de tuer les lions d'Afrique, réservés pour les spectacles de Rome ; un paysan qui eût disputé sa vie contre un de ces aminaux eût été sévèrement puni (IV. VI. 13). The same information is conveyed by a footnote in « The Decline and Fall » (I, p. 93). « The African lions when pressed by hunger infested the open villages, and cultivated country and they infested them with impunity. The royal beast was reserved for the pleasures of the emperor and the capital ; and the unfortunate peasant who killed one, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty ».

Departing from direct imitation, Chateaubriand sometimes uses Gibbon's weapons against himself, and of this procedure there is no better example, perhaps, than the treatment of « popular devotions » in part three of the « Génie ». In the well-known chapter fifteen of « The Decline and Fall », round which a storm of controversy once raged and in which the famous « secondary causes » of the spread of Christianity are expounded, the author claims that the pious practices of the Catholic Church took the place of the superstitions and idolatry of paganism and supplied a need that is innate in man. « A state of scepticism, » he says, « may amuse a few inquisitive minds. But the practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude that, if they are for-

1. Quoted by Mr. Dick in « Plagiats », p. 57.

cibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision. Their love of the marvellous and supernatural, their curiosity with regard to future events, and their strong propensity to extend their hopes and fears beyond the limits of the visible world, were the principal causes which favoured the establissement of polytheism. So urgent on the vulgar is the necessity of believing that the fall of any system of mythology will most probably be succeeded by the introduction of some other mode of superstition » (*op. cit.*, II, p. 56). Without denying this weakness, inherent in human nature. Chateaubriand turns it to his own account. « Il faut du merveilleux, un avenir, des espérances à l'homme, parce-qu'il se sent fait pour l'immortalité. Les conjurations, la nécromancie, ne sont chez le peuple que l'instinct de la religion et une des preuves les plus frappantes de la nécessité d'un culte. On a des devins quand on n'a plus de prophètes, des sortilèges, quand on renonce aux cérémonies religieuses et l'on ouvre les antres des sorciers quand on ferme les temples du Seigneur. » (III. V. 6.) And far from deriding man's tendency to superstition, he shows its advantages. « Le peuple est bien plus sage que les philosophes..... Pour l'homme de foi, la nature est une constante merveille. Souffre-t-il, il prie sa petite image et il est soulagé. A-t-il besoin de revoir un parent, un ami, il fait un vœu, prend le bâton et le bourdon du pélerin ; il franchit les Alpes, ou les Pyrénées ; visite Notre-Dame de Lorette ou Saint-Jacques en Galicie ; il se prosterne il prie le saint de lui rendre un fils..... de sauver une épouse, de prolonger les jours d'un père » (IV. V. 6). For this, too, the model in « The Decline and Fall » is not hard to find. « The Christians frequented the tombs of the martyrs in the hope of obtaining from their powerful intercession, every sort of spiritual but more especially of temporal blessing. They implored the preservation of their health or the cure of their infirmities, the fruitfulness of their barren wives, or the safety and happiness of their children. Whenever they undertook any distant or dangerous journey, they requested that the holy martyrs would be their guides and protectors on the road ; and if they returned without having experienced any misfortune, they again hastened to the tomb of the martyrs to celebrate with grateful thanksgiving their obligations to the memory and relics of those heavenly patrons » (*op. cit.* III, pp. 214 ff.). Apart from the commentary of the sceptic and the criticism of the unbeliever, much of Gibbon's history was quite

suitable for a religious treatise, as the author of the « Génie » was quick to recognise and by carefully avoiding the dangerously controversial zone, he was able to adapt to his own purposes, a good deal of the materials of a powerful adversary.

Another historian of a different order, whose influence is equally great in the « Génie », is the Oriental scholar, Thomas Maurice, author of a « History of Hindostan » (1795-1798) and « Indian Antiquities » (1793-1800), works of considerable popularity in their time. Something of a poet as well, Maurice had early become known in literary circles in London and acquired a reputation for erudition. He was encouraged in his first poetical efforts by no less a personage than Dr. Johnson and in his later studies of antiquity, by the great Orientalist, Sir Wm. Jones with whom he was on intimate terms. His « History of Hindostan », which was fathered by the East-India Company, contained the results of the latest researches in that country, and was enriched by the labours of the newly-formed Asiatic Society [1], whose publications had just appeared. Though Maurice's name is not mentioned in the « Génie », nor in any of Chateaubriand's works, as far as we know, the « History of Hindostan » is quoted anonymously among a number of authorities in a footnote to the chapter called « Supériorité de la tradition de Moïse sur toutes les autres cosmogonies » (I. III. 1.). A fair amount of this very chapter is derived, from that part of Maurice's history which deals with « the different systems of the cosmogony of the Ancients and their inferiority to the Mosaic account », but it is so interwoven with material from other sources that it is well-nigh impossible to indicate the points of contact. With the borrowings in other chapters, the task is easier.

When Chateaubriand discounts the absurd claims of the Egyptians to the immense duration of their Empire (see *G. du C.* I. IV. 2), he is, no doubt, inspired by Maurice who says : « Those haughty and presumptuous asserters of their unrivalled antiquity beyond all nations of the old world, the Egyptians... computed time by the lunar year of thirty days, a circumstance which swelled their chronology to a prodigious and incredible amount » : and when he quotes Plutarch on the same subject, he is but following the precedent of the English orientalist, who also gives

1. Founded by Sir Wm. Jones, in 1784 and referred to by Chateaubriand as « La Société de Calcutta », (*G. du C.* I. III. 1).

the argument of the greek historian [1]. To the generaloutline of the chapter on « Astronomie » as well as for some of its details, Chateaubriand is again inspired by the « History of Hindostan ». Describing the origins of that science, he says : « l'astronomie doit sa naissance à des pasteurs. Dans les déserts de la création nouvelle, les premiers humains voyaient se jouer autour d'eux leurs familles et leurs troupeaux... Lorsque le coteau prochain avait donné toutes ses herbes à leurs brebis, montés sur leurs chariots, couverts de peaux, avec leurs fils et leurs épouses, ils allaient à travers les bois chercher quelque fleuve ignoré, où la fraîcheur des ombrages et la beauté des solitudes les invitaient à se fixer de nouveau. Mais il fallait une boussole pour se conduire dans ces forêts sans chemins, et le long de ces fleuves sans navigateurs, on se confia naturellement à la foi des étoiles, on se dirigea sur leurs cours... Chaque famille s'attacha aux pas d'une constellation, chaque astre marchait à la tête d'un troupeau. A mesure que les pasteurs se livraient à ces études, ils découvraient de nouvelles lois » (I. V. 3). Without the biblical aspect [2] of soft green fields and shepherds amid their flocks, so dear to the author of the « Génie », Maurice's description is somewhat similar. « Now it will scarcely be denied that those nations of the ancient world who first cultivated habits of commercial intercourse with their fellow-mortals in distant quarters of the globe and who frequently traversed the vast ocean, must necessarily and diligently, have observed the stars ; nor, that those whose country abounded with sandy deserts of almost boundless extent and where no objects but earth and sky met the view of the benighted wanderer, could scarcely avoid fixing their eyes upon some celestial body of greater magnitude and brilliancy or of more singular form than the rest, as a guide to direct their devious feet » (*History of Hindostan*, I, p. 185).

Of the fabled pillars in the desert, on which the Egyptians wrote their astronomical discoveries, we read in the « Génie » :

1. « Encore », dit-il (Plutarque) parlant des Egyptiens, « que leur année ait été de quatre mois, selon quelques auteurs, elle n'était d'abord composés que d'un seul, et ne contenait que le cours d'une seule lune. Et ainsi, faisant d'un seul mois une année, cela est cause que le temps qui s'est écoulé depuis leur origine parait extrêmement long, et que bien qu'ils habitent nouvellement leur pays, ils passent pour les plus anciens des peuples. Nous savons d'ailleurs... que les Egyptiens mettent leur orgueil à égarer leur origine dans les temps, et, pour ainsi dire, à cacher leur berceau sous les siècles. » (*G. du C.* I. IV. 2).

2. For the important part played by the Bible in the composition of the « Génie », see J. van Ness Smead : « Chateaubriand et la Bible », 1924.

« de petites colonnes de briques servaient à conserver le souvenir des observations ; jamais plus grand empire n'eut une histoire plus simple. Avec le même instrument, dont il avait percé sa flûte, au pied du même autel où il avait immolé le chevreau premier-né, le pâtre gravait, sur un rocher, ses immortelles découvertes » (I. IV. 3) ; and in Maurice we have a full account, taken from the historian, Josephus. « The children of Seth... were the inventors of that peculiar sort of wisdom which relates to the heavenly bodies and their order. That their inventions might not be lost before they were sufficiently known, upon Adam's prediction that the world was to be destroyed at one time by the violence of fire, they made two pillars, one of brick, the other of stone ; they inscribed their discoveries on them both, that in case the pillar of brick should be destroyed by the flood, the pillar of stone might remain and exhibit their discoveries to mankind and also inform them that there was another pillar of brick erected by them. Now this remains in the land of Seriad to this day » (*op. cit.*, I, p. 260).

In that lovely paragrah, on the agricultural history of astronomy : « Il [le pâtre] plaçait ailleurs d'autres témoins de cette pastorale astronomie, il échangeait d'annales avec le firmament et, de même qu'il avait écrit les fastes des étoiles parmi les troupeaux, il écrivait les fastes de ses troupeaux parmi les étoiles. Le soleil, en voyageant, ne se reposa plus que dans les bergeries ; le taureau annonça par des mugissements le passage du père du jour, et le bélier l'attendait pour le saluer au nom de son maître. On vit au ciel des vierges, des enfants, des épis de blé, des instruments de labourage, les agneaux et jusqu'au chien du berger ; la sphère entière devint comme une grande maison rustique habitée par le pasteur des hommes » (*G. du C.* I. IV. 3), there is certainly something due to Maurice, however feeble the original in comparison with the copy. Here is what we find in the « History of Hindostan » : « It was agriculture, in fact, that gave existence to the solar zodiac ; the heavens were the brilliant calendar by which alone, the first husbandmen could regulate their transactions, and their progress through the rural year was governed by the radiant march through the sky of the planet of day ;... it was natural for the simple swain, observant of nature and guided by her unvarying laws, to call this, the season of the ram and that, the season of the kids, the original Gemini of the

zodiac, as he successively beheld those animals at particular seasons obey her sovereign voice, by instinctively exploring the female of the pasture and propagating their respective kinds... To note the seasons of the solistices and equinoxes by animals and objects descriptive of the oblique and retrograde motion of the sun would naturally occur to those to whom those seasons were so important, and the autumnal and brumal seasons would be marked by objects best illustrative of the atmosphere and the corresponding occupations of the husbandmen » (*op. cit.* I, p. 310). Maurice concludes, « that astronomy, so far from subverting, gives a decided support to the truth of the Mosaic records and consequently to Christianity » (p. 333), and Chateaubriand seems to echo these words in the opening of his next chapter on the « Deluge ». « L'astronomie », he says, « n'étant donc pas suffisante pour détruire la chronologie de l'Écriture, on vient à l'attaquer par l'histoire naturelle » (I. IV. 4).

In the synopsis of a chapter in the « History of Hindostan », devoted to the oriental accounts of the deluge, Chateaubriand seems to have got material for another paragraph. « That there has been a general inundation of this terraqueous globe, proved... from the abrupt appearance of the surface — from disordered strata of its internal regions — and from an infinite variety of fossil bodies, animal and marine dug up in climates where the animals could not possibly have existed when alive — plants and animals, for instance, peculiar to the East Indies and America, found fossil at the greatest depths in Siberia, in Germany and in Great Britain — particular accounts of the remains of an elephant, an hippotamus and a crocodile dug up in Britain » (*op. cit*, p. 507), counts for something, we think, in the composition of the following : « Dieu, ayant accompli sa vengeance, dit aux mers de rentrer dans l'abîme ; mais il voulut imprimer sur ce globe des traces de son courroux ; les dépouilles de l'éléphant des Indes s'entassèrent dans les régions de la Sibérie ; les coquillages magellaniques vinrent s'enfouir dans les carrières de la France ; des bancs entiers de corps marins s'arrêtèrent au sommet des Alpes, du Taurus et des Cordilières, et ces montagnes elles-mêmes furent les monuments que Dieu laissa dans les trois mondes pour marquer son triomphe sur les impies » (I. IV. 4). Nor does this complete the sum of the borrowings from the « History of Hindostan ». They include a number of topics, such as

the origin of the compass, growth in the tropics, the invention of the arts, the identification of the Egyptian Toth, and the Mundane Egg, that Chateaubriand with characteristic genius, adapted and developed beyond recognition. The treatment of the same subjects, however, helps to corroborate our opinion that this work was a fairly potent source of the « Génie » and a happy hunting-ground for those semi-historical and highly imaginative proofs of the truth of the Christian religion in which our poet delighted.

To « Indian Antiquities » by the same author, Chateaubriand turned for another type of material. In the third volume of that work, in which there is a lengthy account of the beginnings of architecture, he seems to have found the basis of the best part of that fascinating chapter on « Églises Gothiques » (*G. du C.* III. I. 8), with which every student of French literature is familiar. « Les forêts ont été les premiers temples de la divinité et les hommes ont pris dans les forêts la première idée de l'architecture. Les Grecs ont tourné l'élégante colonne corinthienne avec son chapiteau de feuilles sur le modèle du palmier. Les énormes piliers du vieux style égyptien représentent le sycomore, le figuier oriental, le bananier, et la plupart des arbres gigantesques de l'Afrique et de l'Asie. Les forêts des Gaules ont passé à leur tour dans les temples de nos pères et nos bois de chênes ont ainsi maintenu leur origine sacrée. Ces voûtes ciselées en feuillages, ces jambages qui appuient les murs et finissent brusquement comme des troncs brisés, la fraîcheur des voûtes, les ténèbres du sanctuaire, les ailes obscures, les passages secrets, les portes abaissées, tout retrace les labyrinthes des bois dans l'église gothique, tout en fait sentir la religieuse horreur, les mystères et la divinité » (III. I. 8). If Maurice has not the same charm of expression or poetic detail as the « Enchanteur », he has much the same thought. « Born in the deep shades of the forest », he says, « or nursed in the dreary solitude of caverns, which formed the first human habitations, mankind originally borrowed from them, the mode of constructing houses for themselves and erecting temples to the deity..... Trunks of trees..... rudely if at all sculptured, placed perpendicularly and ranged in regular rows to imitate groves, with other trunks of trees, placed upon them transversely, formed the first temples. Such were the earliest columns, architecture could boast, such was the most ancient, unadorned roof » (*Indian Antiquities*, pp. 450-460).

From the same work comes, too, the observation in the « Génie » that the Corinthian capital was imitated from the palm-tree, for we find under a plate representing the Temple of Esnay, the following inscription : « This temple forms an oblong square, closed on three sides, but open in front. The columns fluted like those in the Indian temples, have capitals ornamented with palm leaves and are supposed to have given the Greeks the first idea of the Corinthian order » (*Indian Antiquities*, Vol. III). The fanciful story of Vitruvius which Maurice gives in full [1], though not adopted in the « Génie » is mentioned by its author as an alternative explanation of the origin of the Corinthian capital. « Vitruve », he says in a foot-note, « raconte autrement l'invention du chapiteau ; mais cela ne détruit pas ce principe général, que l'architecture est née dans les bois ». That Chateaubriand should have preferred the palm-tree theory is not astonishing, for we find it very plausibly explained in Maurice too. « Some particular trees, for reasons principally to be found in physical researches, were considered by the ancients in a light, peculiarly sacred. Among these, in Egypt, the palm-tree ranked highest, and for this reason, that species of tree was most frequently used in the sacred buildings of that country, as indeed they afterwards were in those of the Hebrews..... it has been remarked by Pococke that many of the most ancient pillars in the Egyptian temples « bear great resemblance to palm-trees and that their capitals are made in imitation of the top of that tree when all the lower boughs are cut off » (*op. cit.* III. pp. 468-469).

Chateaubriand's remark « cet art a donc dû varier selon les climats » recalls another discussion in Maurice, when differentiating between the various kinds of architecture. « Undoubt-

1. « A young Corinthian who was on the point of marriage, fell sick and died. Full of affection and compassion, the nurse under whose tender care she had been brought up, hurried to the tomb of departed beauty and placed upon it a basket, containing some vases filled with the flowers of the acanthus, which the dear deceased had valued during her life and which had been cherished by her fostering hand. To preserve from the injury of the weather, those tender plants which adorned the untimely grave of the young bride, she covered the basket with a tile, through the extremities of which in the ensuing spring, when vegetation was renewed, the stalks and leaves of the growing plants forced themselves, but being kept down by the weight of the tile, assumed a form similar to the sweeps of the volutes in architecture. Callimachus, a famous sculptor of that age, whom for the delicacy with which he wrought in marble, the Athenians called Catatechnos, passing by the tomb, admired the manner in which the flowers encompassed the basket and immediately formed after that model, the capital of the Corinthian column ». (« Indian Antiquities », III. p. 472).

edly », he says, « the great difference between the Indian and Egyptian architecture and that of the Greeks, is to be accounted for in the prior antiquity of the former nations, whose ancestors carried away with them, from the stupendous excavations on the heights of the Caucasus and the mountains of the Thebais, their former residence, architectural notions of the most awful and magnificent kind, impressed upon their minds by the constant contemplation of nature in her most gloomy form » ; (p. 464) and further,« the Greeks in the Lesser Asia, accustomed to no such awful objects in nature, aimed to charm the beholder by the beauty and elegance of their buildings rather than to astonish by the grandeur of design and stupendous elevation. The less daring genius of that nation, as well in their domestic as sacred edifices, led them to imitate nature in her humbler, rather than her magnificent walk ; to copy the exquisite workmanship of her plastic hand in the arbour of twining jessamine and the bower of fragrant myrtle, rather than the lofty grove of the aspiring cedar, and widely-branching fir » (*op. cit.* III. pp. 464-65).

For a lover of the exotic, haunted by the image of foreign lands, like Chateaubriand, the works of Maurice must have been a revelation. Lured by the East, with all its romantic strangeness, from the days when as a boy at Combourg, he had listened with rapt attention to the thrilling tales of his father's adventures at sea or shared the old man's enthusiam for the abbé Raynal's « Histoire des Deux Indes », he had more than once, tried to satisfy this thirst for the unknown and set sail for India. The first attempt followed his return from Dinan, where he had gone to study for the priesthood. « Je déclarai que j'irai au Canada défricher des forêts ou aux Indes chercher du service dans les armées des princes de ce pays » (*M. O. T.*, I, p. 162). His father sends him to Saint Malo to join a ship for Pondicherry, but the departure is delayed too long and the volatile François-René gives up the idea, and returns home. The next time, his thoughts of the East take definite shape, he is in exile in London and in dire distress. He appeals to the Hamburg publisher, Dulau, for translations and threatens to emigrate to India, if circumstances do not improve. The « Génie » is on the stocks, in fact the first draft is ready, but it awaits the touches of colour, the gold and purple, that were to be infused into it by the report of strange manners and strange customs from other lands. With the reawakening

of the old desire of travel and without means to satisfy it, Chateaubriand would seem to have plunged into these romantic accounts of the East and found escape in the history of an older civilisation from the misery and monotony of everyday life. At any rate, the traces of oriental exoticism in the « Génie » are so frequent as to make us believe that Chateaubriand's interest in India was almost, if not quite, as great as his interest in the New World.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion.
The « Génie du Christianisme » in England.

When we remember the unprecedented success of the « Génie du Christianisme » in France and the war of controversy to which it gave rise, it is but natural to expect some repercussion on this side of the channel. Of such, however, there is no sign. Though the treaty of Amiens had brought hostilities to an end and reopened communications between England and France, for a time, at least, the fame of a book that had taken Paris by storm, seems scarcely to have reached these shores at all or if it did, to have been immediately discredited by responsible journalism. Contemporary English knowledge, we almost said ignorance, of the « Génie » might be summed up in the contemptuous remark in the Paris letter of the « Times » for the 13 May 1802. « The women and people of fashion are enthusiastic admirers of M. de Chateaubriand's new work but it is not read by any others » [1].

This neglect of a French work of such eminence is all the more strange, considering the prominence it received in the Emigration press in London [2]. Peltier's Journal, « Paris pendant l'Année », kept up a running commentary on its progress throughout the year preceding its publication and gave a series of quotations and fragments in the months that followed its appearance. Another journal of the « Emigrés », the « Courrier de Londres », edited by Montlosier, was equally flattering in its comments on the author of « Atala », and in the space allotted to the « Génie » in its columns. It was in England too, that the first anthology to rank Chateaubriand with the immortals, saw the light. The second edition of the « Bibliothèque Portative des Écrivains

1. M. Pierre Moreau writes of Chateaubriand , « toute sa vie et par delà sa vie, il enchantera les femmes, les jeunes gens, il ne conquerra que de haute lutte et lentement, les gens circonspectes, fidèles aux traditions. Ce poète... éblouissait l'esprit, étonnait le cœur des jeunes gens et des femmes ». (*Chateaubriand*, p. 238).

2. See M. F. Baldensperger. « Etudes d'Histoire Littéraires », Série 2. pp. 140-154.

Français » by Moysant and Levizac (1803) contained over a dozen extracts from the « Génie » and a short biographical notice of its author. Nor was it only in choice selections, that readers in England could learn to know the « Génie ». Several London publishers included it in their catalogues of new books and Pailhès, who says it was in great demand among the members of the French colony [1], mentions a letter from the author on June 9, 1802, asking Migneret to forward 134 copies to Dulau for sale in this country. Six months later, Chateaubriand writes to Dulau, himself, offering to selle the rights of his new work « dont la traduction se fait en ce moment à Paris par une dame anglaise, pleine d'esprit et de talent » (*Correspondance Générale* II, p. 324). On the 14 March 1803, we learn by another letter that « the translation is well advanced ». but with the gathering of the war clouds and the breaking-off of diplomatic relations with France, the curtain falls on the English version and we hear of it no more. When peace is restored between the two countries again, Chateaubriand has entered into public life, with the return of the Bourbons, and has begun to display the same independence of spirit in the political as in the literary world. More ultra than the ultras, he opposes the government of Louis XVIII, and upholds the new Constitution. Persecuted for « La Monarchie selon la Charte », he is chased from the ministry and deprived of his pension. His cause is espoused by the « Times » in London, which represents him as a champion of liberty and progress, and quotes freely from the suppressed political pamphlet. It even publishes a short account of his life (10 oct. 1816), in which his literary work is briefly appraised. But while lionised by the « Times », he is bitterly attacked by the « Morning Chronicle », which sees in him, nothing more than a base political opportunist.

Somewhat similar is the attitude of the « London Magazine » in an article on « Contemporary Foreign Authors and Statesmen » a good many years later (1828). With all the ruthlessness to which party politics of that day were allowed to give vent, the former French ambassador is denounced as a common place-hunter, changing his colours like a cameleon with every change of fortune : « republican and philosopher at the beginning of

1. « Chateaubriand : Sa Femme et ses Amis », p. 97 : « L'apologie composée à Londres, y fut demandée aussitôt que publiée. Elle y obtint un grand succès parmi les retardataires de l'émigration ».

his career, monarchical and catholic in his maturity, Bonapartist under the enemy, royalist after the Restoration, the friend of despotism when in power, the defender of liberty when in disgrace and according to the circumstances of the moment, forging weapons in the « Journal des Débats » for the independance of the people or the despotism of kings » (*London Magazine*, *New Series*, XI, p. 505). From such a merciless critic, there is little hope for the « Génie », which is in fact, curtly described as « a mixture of some sublime parts with ridiculous and tedious disquisitions ». For « Les Martyrs », the critic is more discriminating and shows a finer sense of appreciation. « Its plan », he says, « is vast and well wrought out, it contains novel and ably-drawn characters, descriptions full of truth and beauty, a style frequently calling to mind the beautiful Homeric simplicity ; bold images and ideas, sometimes bordering on the fantastic but still strictly those of a poet ; a whole, in short, in which as in the most part of M. de Chateaubriand's works, there is much to blame but still more to admire » (*L. M.*, XI, 3rd S. p. 509).

In the same year (1828), we find another biased account of Chateaubriand's works in the « Foreign Review », where the writer deals mainly with the « Voyages en Amérique et en Italie », « Les Natchez » and « Discours sur la Chute et la Décadence de Rome ». He exposes the borrowings from Beltrami in the « Voyage en Amérique » and accuses the author of the basest plagiarism. For « Les Natchez » he has scant praise and treats the story of the lost manuscript with the greatest scorn. « An unkind critic might hint his suspicions », he says, « that the treasure was safe because valueless to the hosts and that when M. de Chateaubriand dreaded « lest his name, having risen from obscurity, and caught by means of the London newspapers the attention of his landlady's children, might have prompted them to make use of those papers which then would have acquired a certain value », he was labouring under a gratuitous terror. In 1814 the viscount Chateaubriand was known in England but by his Atala, which found small favour in English eyes, or as a stipendiary confectioner of literary bonbons for the little king of Rome » (Vol. I, p. 473).

In the « Discours » as in the « Voyage en Amérique » there is too much imitation and the author is severely blamed for not having consulted the originals. « His style loaded with false orna-

ment and glittering with antithesis and epigram may be suited for a declamation » but certainly not for an historical work which deals only with plain facts ». The measure of the critic may be taken from his concluding remarks : « We do not know », he says, « whether his greater historical work is ever destined to appear, but if it does, we promise him faithfully that we shall direct our attention to it. If the « Discours » which we have just now analysed, be a fair sample of the whole, we may promise our readers a rich harvest of amusement » (*F. R.*, Vol. I, p. 489).

More appreciative of Chateaubriand's beautiful prose style is the critic of the Foreign Quarterly Review of 1832, though he does not succeed in bringing the discussion to much higher ground. He criticises the Génie from the point of view of a polemic and decides that it has been of little benefit to catholicity. To show that Christianity is favourable to poetry, literature and the fine arts instead of being a help, is derogatory to the cause of belief. « Can anyone », he says, « who regards it [the Christian religion] rightly, feel that to the immensity of its importance, one tittle has been added by the most satisfactory proof, that poetry, painting, architecture, and music are not incompatible with its tenets ? M. de Chateaubriand, for a devout man, seems strangely insensible to the immense inequality between the substantial importance of religion and the value of the trappings which he summons to support it ». Of the originality of the criticism contained in the famous « Poétique du Christianisme » the reviewer seems to have not the slightest inkling : « All this », he says, « is very agreeably written and capable of affording much amusement, but we can hardly perceive its utility, we cannot perceive that it leads us to any satisfactory result ». It is easy to see that his mind is closed to the real value of the « Génie » and that he has not grasped the importance and vitality of the problems that Chateaubriand is helping to solve, the linking up of literature and religion and the widening of the literary horizon (See F. Q. R., Vol. X, p. 297).

Even less sympathetic with the aims of the « Génie du Christianisme » is the « Quarterly Review[1] » of 1834 in an article on Guizot's translation of « The Decline and Fall » and Chateau-

1. The critic of the Quarterly Review anticipates M. Dick's accusation of plagiarism in Chateaubriand's « Discours Historiques », which he says is almost entirely taken from « The Decline and Fall » (Q. R. v. 50, p. 298).

briand's « Discours Historiques ». Though the critic is a protestant, he disapproves as strongly of Chateaubriand's defence of religion as the orthodox believer of the Foreign Quarterly and takes our poet to task for the frivolous nature of his apologetic.

« Much of the argument in his « Génie du Christiansme », he says, « is to prove the truth of Christianity, from its equality, if not its superiority to paganism, as a subject of poetic inspiration. The veracity of the Gospels is risked in the balance of merit between Tasso and Milton against Homer and Virgil. Such a work might produce an impression in his own country and its popularity shows how well suited it was for its atmosphere. But where, as with us, religion is more an affair of the reason, however we may read with interest some of the parallel passages adduced from the great poets of each age by the Christian critic, however we may admire the felicity with which he has at times handled the more convincing argument, the moral influences of Christianity. Yet our protestant tone of religious feeling, instead of joining in the applause, lavished even by the unbelievers of his countrymen upon the « Génie du Christianisme », can scarcely disguise astonishment, not so much at its extensive and lasting literary success, as at its passing for a powerful and satisfactory defence of the faith of the New Testament » [1] (Q. R., v. 50, p. 297).

From such pedantic drivel, it is a relief to turn to the pages of « Blackwood's Magazine » and find a writer who is not only a critic but a man of letters as well, capable of distinguishing between a piece of literature and a polemic. Chateaubriand occupies quite an honourable position in this Journal in which a series of articles are devoted to his work, between the years 1832 and 1835. A few of the papers bear the signature O. D. which represents no doubt the celebrated Irishman, Maginn, the O'Doherty of the Noctes Ambrosianæ and former Paris correspondant of the « Representative » [2]. They show an understanding

1. The « Essai sur la Littérature Anglaise » is even more unjustly treated by the « Quarterly Review » (V. 65). « We are sorry to say that in M. de Chateaubriand's new work on English Literature there is nothing of any value whatever. We greatly doubt whether he could construe one page in any of the authors whom he there affects to discuss. The preposterous vanity which runs through the whole book is truly pitiable; but we are not disposed to enter at length upon this homily of Grenada. Requiescat » ! (Sept. 1836).

2. O. D. lived in Paris 1826-1827. See Memoir of Wm. Maginn, *Maginn's Miscellanies* by Dr. Shelton Mackenzie (1857).

and appreciation of the great French writer's work, of which there is perhaps no other example in English literature, at least within the lifetime of our poet, and display great surprise and concern at the almost complete indifference with which it has been treated by the people of this country. « It is a singular circumstance that an author of such great and varied acquirements, who is universally allowed by all parties in France to be their greatest living writer, should be hardly known except by name to the great body of readers in this country » (*B. M.*, v. 31, p. 565, 1832) ; and again « out of the many hundred thousand educated persons who read this Miscellany, we doubt if there are many hundreds who ever read the « Genius of Christianity ». Translations may exist — editions have been printed in this country — but still the work itself, like all the standard productions of French genius during the last thirty years, is almost totally unknown to the British public » (*Id.*, Vol. 32, p. 233, 1832). To remedy this defect, the critic of « Maga » introduces to his readers some of the finest things in Chateaubriand's prose, familiarising them by original translations and embellishing them with his own rapturous remarks. After a paper on the « Itinéraire » from which he quotes many beautiful passages, he turns to the « Génie », about which he has several flattering things to say. « The greatest work of this writer is his « Génie du Christianisme », a work of consummate ability and splendid eloquence, in which he has enlisted in the cause of religion all the treasures of knowledge and all the experience of ages, and sought to captivate the infidel generation in which he wrote, not only by the force of argument, but the grace of imagination » (*B. M.*, v. 31, p. 554).

To illustrate the originality and fitness of the defence of religion contained in the « Génie », he shows how Chateaubriand « applied himself to accumulate the conclusions in its favour which arose from its internal beauty, from its beneficent effect on society, from the changes it had wrought on civilisation, the happiness and the destinies of mankind ; from its analogy with the sublimest tenets of natural religion ; from its increasing progress, its indefinite extension and undecaying youth », and justifies the apologist's use of « every engine which fancy, experience or poetry could suggest to sway the hearts of his readers », by

pointing out that « he knew well he was addressing an impassioned and volatile generation, upon whom reason would be thrown away, if not enforced with eloquence and argument lost, if not clothed in the garb of fancy ». It is regrettable that the examination goes no farther than the first part of the « Génie », for though the reviewer promises to continue the study, he seems never to have kept his word.

The next essays are devoted to the « Mémoires », just then emerging into daylight from the shadowy seclusion of the Abbaye-aux-Bois. Most of the extracts are taken from the contemporary papers in France which were then vieing with one another for the publication of the first fragments of our poet's biography. With the revelations of the « Mémoires », the critic of « Maga » waxes more enthusiastic than ever in his adoration for Chateaubriand, as if infected with the fervour and exaltation of the habitués of Mme Récamier's salon. « Who can have read his works » he says, « and above all, who can have perused those passages of his life of which we have been able to catch some of the echoes, and not feel the want of rendering the homage of a full heart to such a genius and such a character ? » As a conservative and upholder of tradition, O. D. is pleased to see in Chateaubriand a representative of the old French aristocracy and one of the noblest of his race. « What first strikes us », he says, « as brightly peculiar in him, is that he is a « reste », a remnant, an old corinthian column, rearing its decorated head amid ruins, the lingerer behind of a race, which has passed suddenly away from the earth, the last of French gentlemen » (*B. M.*, v. 36, p. 240, 1834). Acting up to the best traditions of his family, Chateaubriand follows the dictates of honour throughout his public career ; « the Republic, the Empire, the ancient monarchy have all seen him an active agent, preserving a unity and simplicity of character, a real, not a mock consistency of views and principles throughout... we have no time-serving, no expediency, no Protean forms to suit Protean times, but the warmth, energy, sincerity and boldness of his heart seem to have fused the outward elements of his destiny into such shape, as it consisted with honour, bright, strict and inflexible, to pursue » (*Id.*, v. 36, p. 240). It was perhaps for this tribute to his moral character, that Chateaubriand decided to supply the English reviewer with personal extracts from his Mémoires. At any rate the favour was

not unmerited and O. D.'s gratitude knows no bounds. « We are proud to be able to state », he says, « that we have received the passages we now communicate, direct from M. de Chateaubriand himself [1]. He has done us his honour and has besides expressed his lively satisfaction on perusing the previous articles on his works » (*id.*, V. 36, p. 802). That we may realise the extent of the honour conferred on him, O. D. tries to give us an idea of the atmosphere of incense in which the Great Man moves at that moment. « Without exaggeration, we may assert that Roman emperors, « grands monarques » and all the patrons of letters from Maecenas downwards have never been regaled with such a full chorus of eulogistic harmony as has been M. de Chateaubriand since the first sound of his Mémoirs issued from the Abbaye-aux-Bois and was taken up and repeated in a thousand echoes by the whole press of France » (id., p. 802).

By contrast with his present greatness, we are reminded of his early days of poverty in England and the Bungay idyll is recalled. A new light is thrown on this episode by a letter to Jules Janin [2] from Baron Billing, French chargé d'affaires at Naples and Chateaubriand's intimate friend during his Embassy in London. The Baron tells of a letter from Charlotte Ives, now married to ayoung clergyman, asking to be allowed to call on the French ambassador and seems to corroborate the tradition in Bungay recorded by M. Dick [3], that the famous interview was not a surprise, as Chateaubriand would have us believe, but had been previously arranged. « She asked his permission », says the Baron, « to present to him, her husband, but above all to thank in the name of her aged parents, the ambassador of the powerful king of France for the benefits that the poor author, then unknown, of the « Essay on Revolutions », had conferred on them. « You cannot have forgotten, said she, « that knowing my parents to be in distress, you compassionated the sufferings you yourself had experienced and abandoned generously all the profits of a work which you had just

1. All these extracts, including Baron Billing's letter and Chateaubriand's letter to Mennechet appear in « Lectures des Mémoires », Paris 1834.

2. Editor of the « Revue de Paris » and the first to pubish a report of the readings at the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

3. *R. H. L.* 1903, Vol. XV. « Le séjour de Chateaubriand en Suffolk. »

published ». While allowing for the biographical errors [1], due no doubt to the fact that the tale was told from memory, there is no more reason to doubt its veracity than that of Chateaubriand's generosity to the Royal Literary Fund, the story of which has only recently been disinterred from the dust of time [2]. Retold in the pages of Blackwood's Magazine, it is worth relating again. « Whilst M. de Chateaubriand was in London, he sent to the Literary Association fund 100 louis. In consequence of this liberal donation, he was invited to the annual banquet, of the society, to which were also invited many other distinguished personages, and among others, M. Canning. After the dinner was removed, M. de Chateaubriand's health was proposed, and he was handsomely thanked for his generous contribution. He immediately rose to reply, but finding some difficulty in expressing himself in English, he begged Mr. Canning, who sat near him to speak for him, upon which Mr. Canning rose, and declared in the name of M. de Chateaubriand that he had given nothing, that he had only paid a debt, that he had been formerly assisted, and many times, by the association, as a foreign author, during his first residence in England, that he merely made a return of wath he had received from his brothe rauthors and that it was he who had to express gratitude but not to receive thanks ». (B. M. v. 37, p. 620).

For the next most comprehensive report of the « Génie du Christianisme », we must search the pages of the radical Edinburgh Review, where naturally enough, we will not find as much indulgence for the emigré-author as in the columns of its tory rival. The reviewer calls attention to the opportune appearance of the work in 1802, and if his remarks have become trite and commonplace, they were probably fresh enough then. « Many popular authors », he says, « owe their celebrity to their coincidence with a sentiment peculiar to their age and M. de Chateaubriand was indebted to a similar cause for much of his influence over the minds of his countrymen. He came to speak of religion at a time when there never was so much need of the consolations of a future state ». Chateaubriand's method of attack is approved

1. Charlotte Sutton's father, the Rev. Clement Ives was dead many years before the interview, having died in 1812, but her mother was still alive. Her husband was not a clergyman but an admiral in the Navy.

2. See *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, T. v. juillet-septembre 1925; and J.-B. Robertson: *Lectures on Modern History and Biography*, p. 296.

as warmly as in « Maga », « there are periods, when great and popular impressions upon the understanding can only be made by appeals to the feelings, when eloquence is more philosophical than logic », but his talents are overrated on account of the excellence of his weapons and the fitness of the circumstances. « His rank, his position in active life, his reverses and withal his egotism, a quality often railed at, often ridiculed, but never ineffective in an eloquent writer, have all contributed to throw a splendour about the man ; and his genius has unquestionably been inaccurately and far too partially gauged by those who measure the height of the author by the shadow of his celebrity ». It is with Chateaubriand's style, that the critic finds most fault. With an ear unattuned to the new harmonies of French prose, he sees only words, at best « eloquent declamation », in the glowing periods of the « Génie », He thinks, Chateaubriand is « ever seeking to say fine things and he is ever saying false ones. Anxious to move, to startle, to astonich, he seems little to care by what means his object is effected ». Even the new and original aesthetic theories of thè « Poétique du Christianisme » so justly praised by modern critics [1], meet with scant approval. Descriptive poetry did not owe its origin, as Chateaubriand said, to Christianity. It is the most elemental type of verse and to be found in the songs of primitive peoples. Art was equally independent of the Christian religion and the great superiority of the Greeks in sculpture was only too apparent. « The spiritual and the mystic may inspire poetry, for poetry does not invoke the imagination through coarse and palpable materials. But in sculpture and even in painting, the immense advantage of the Greeks was in the corporeal form of their religion, in opposition to the mystic .» It was easy enough to find holes in Chateaubriand's armour and hostile criticism on the other side of the Channel abounded in arguments of this kind. Instead of destroyng his « esthétique », they only served to emphasize and put in a strong light, the novelty of his doctrines and prove the soundness of his main thesis. It was a considerable advance, moreover, to find a periodical of such high repute as the Edinburgh Review making a minute examination of the « Génie » after so many years of comparative neglect.

1. See M. Victor Giraud. « Chateaubriand et « le Génie du Christianisme ». *Revue des deux Mondes*, Tome 36, pp. 72-77, Nov. 1926. And M. Pierre Moreau : « Chateaubriand l'homme et la vie, le génie et les livres » (p. 237 ff.) 1927.

Before concluding our study of the « Génie », we would like to say a word about the English translations. Just as it often suffered from the bias of political passion in the hands of the critics, the Génie was subjected to the wil effect of religions prejudice in the hands of the translators. Mutilated by the protestant in his efforts to render it less offensive to his coreligonists, it was weakened by the catholic by fatuous remarks and additions in the interests of pious propaganda. The first English rendering comes in 1813, from Frederick Shoberl [1], a well-known journalist and author, who had given in the previous year, a translation of the « Itinéraire ». In the preface by Dr Henry Kett, who also annotates the text, we learn that « the work had already passed through seven editions in two years and its popularity was spread over the continent by translations into the Italian, German and Russian languages ». Consequently, it was high time for an English version, but in order to make it acceptable to protestant readers, many chapters had to be omitted and many expressions altered. In spite of these omissions and changes, the editor still thought it necessary to put the translator and himself above suspicion. « Much as it is our wish », he says, « to extend the reputation of Chateaubriand by making his work more generally known in this country, we are anxious to have it understood, that we recommend his literary exertions, solely as the noble panegyrist of the Christian religion in general and not as the adherent to the Church of Rome. We are anxious to mark this distinction because we are so far from giving our sanction to any observations of a papistical tendency which may occur in the translation, notwithstanding our endeavours to exclude everything exceptionable, that we explicitly enter our protest against them. » Needless to say, a translation executed in this spirit, could have small literary value, losing much of its unity of composition and originality of thought with these expurgations and interpolations. But it was the first effort to make Chateaubriand's great work known to English readers and for that we must be grateful.

We have to wait a good many years for the next English version, which was the work of the Rev. E. O'Donnell of the Assumption College, Clichy, and appeared in Paris in 1854. Com-

1. « The Beauties of Christianity », translated by F. Shoberl; with a Preface and notes by H. Kett, 3 vol. London 1813.

piled for use in catholic schools. it is an abridged edition, in which only about one half of the « Génie » is given and the contents are entirely rearranged. The translator takes a good many liberties with the text and does not hesitate to add reflections of his own wthout denoting their source. A few examples will help to illustrate his manner. In the beautiful description of the Song of the Birds (*I.* V. 5). Chateaubriand says : « Esclaves [les oiseaux] dans nos maisons, ils multiplient leurs accords, il y a sans doute quelque harmonie cachée dans le malheur, car tous les infortunés sont enclins au chant », and Father O'Donnell translates : « Even confined in cages, they delight us with their nature music and set an example of docility and obedience to unruly children ». The bathos in the next example is even more glaring, for, Chateaubriand's glowingly imaginative, « il y a dans la religion toute une patrie » « becomes » religion is worth treasures of gold and silver in time of distress and persecuton ! » In his efforts to come down to the level of his juvenile readers, the reverend translator has overstepped his mark and given us something, which however edifying, is certainly not Chateaubriand.

The next and only complete English translation of the « Génie » saw the light in 1856. It was the work of an American priest, D^r^ Charles I. White, the editor of the « Catholic Almanac » and translator of « Protestantism and Catholicity » by J.-L. Balmes. D^r^ White makes no pretence at originality, he only claims to be fuller and more accurate than his predecessors. In fact the bulk of his work is a reproduction of Shoberl's version. Here is what he says in the preface : « The work was presented in an English dress for the first time in England ; and the same edition, reprinted in this country, America in 1815, would have been republished now, if it had not been discovered that the translator had taken unwarrantable liberties with the original, omitting innumerable passages and sometimes whole chapters, excluding sentences and paragraphs of the highest importance, those particularly which gave to the author's argument its peculiar force in favour of Catholicism. Such in fact was the number and nature of these omissions, that with the introduction of occasional notes, they detracted in a great measure from the author's purpose and gave to a latitudinarian Christianity, an undue eminence whch he never contemplated... In offering this translation to the public we take pleasure in stating

that we have made a free use of that to which we have alluded, especially in the latter portion of the work ». He confesses to having also consulted the Rev. O'Donnell's work but he prides himself on producing nearly one hundred pages that have never before been published in English. The « Génie » for him is a powerful polemic that has had far-reaching effects in the restoration of religion in France and should be equally potent in the spread of the Faith in America, when translated into English. With the literary merit of the book he has no concern at all, but he spares no effort to give a faithful rendering of the original and his translation has not yet been superseded.

Miss Emma B. Stork's version « The Spirit and Beauties of the Christian Religion », published two years later in Philadelphia only consists of a number of choice selections, arranged and modified with unctuous care. The editor is a lady of high, moral persuasion, whatever her literary gifts, anxious « to displace the cheap literature of the day, especially the works of Sand, Balzac, Sue, Dumas and a host of popular French writers, by a clear and healthful rill of wholesome waters ». In spite of her lofty aim, she does not hesitate to expunge « some of the sentiments of the pious and faithful Chateaubriand » and give us her own idea of how the book should have been written. Her work is the last sign of interest in the « Génie » we can find in the 19th century and marks the end of a period.

Had these translations been enlivened by some of the fire and eloquence of the original, they might have conquered the indifference of the English public to a work in praise of catholicity, and reached a wider public but they had so little to recommend them in the matter of style or diction that they were set aside like all dull books, and soon forgotten. Containing such a pale reflection of the brilliant prose of the « Enchanteur », it is little wonder that few suspected the glory of the model and that no further interest was aroused in Chateaubriand's great masterpiece.

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2. Literary Criticism of Chateaubriand, author and politician, in English reviews and magazines.
3. Translations of the « Génie du Christianisme :

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c) The Genius of Christianity by Charles I. White, D. D.
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